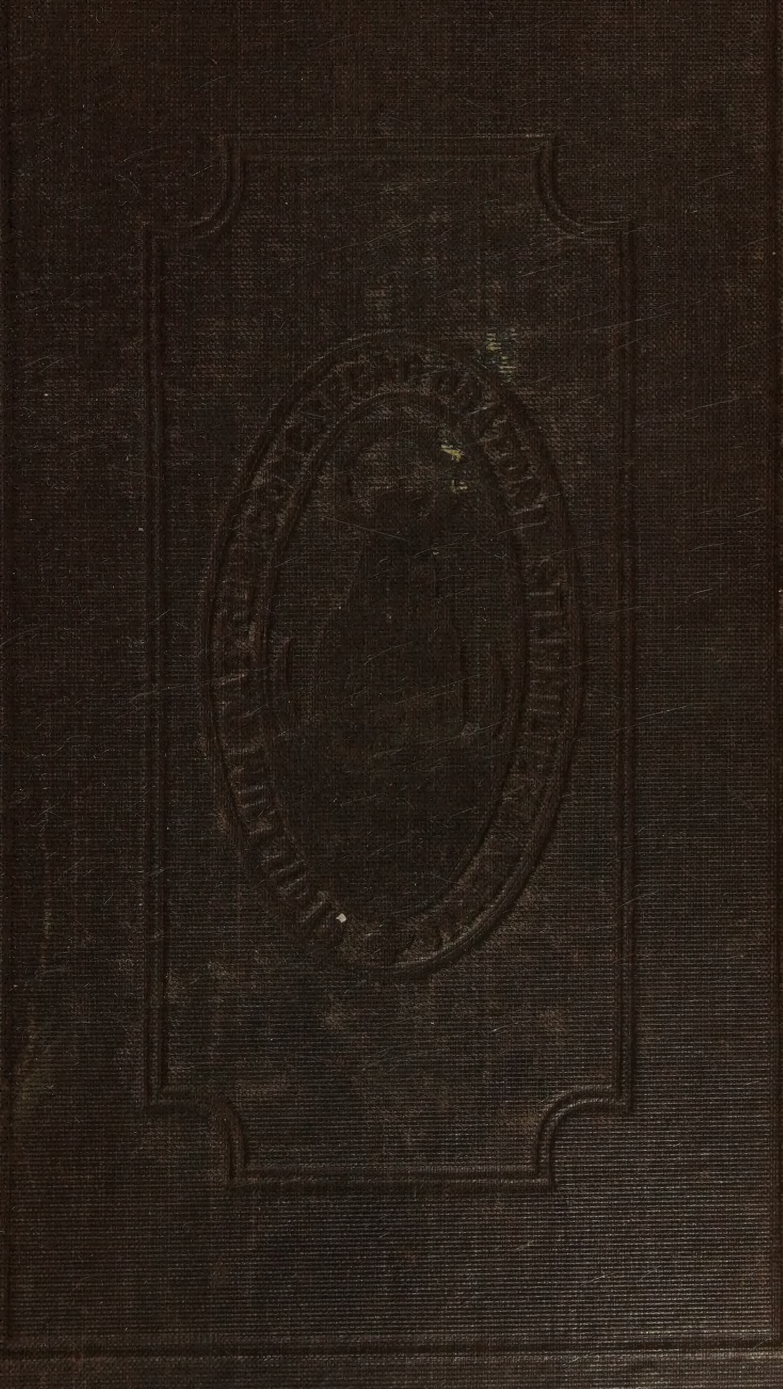

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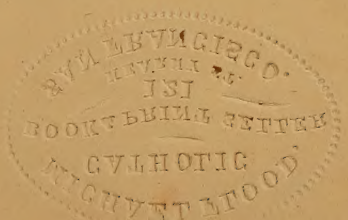

MODERN SAINTS

AND

Servants of God.

S. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

The Saints and Servants of God.

THE LIFE

OF

S. FRANCIS OF ASSISI,

WITH AN

ESSAY ON THE CHARACTERISTICS

OF

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS,

BY THE VERY REV. F. W. FABER,

PRIEST OF THE ORATORY.

"Gaude Maria Virgo, cunctas hæreses sola interemisti in universo mundo."—*Antiph. Ecclesiæ.*

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARDSON AND SON, 172, FLEET STREET;

9, CAPEL ST. DUBLIN; AND DERBY.

M.DCCC.LIII.

We hereby approve and sanction the Series of Lives of the Canonized and Beatified Saints, the Servants of God declared Venerable, and others commonly reputed to have died in the odour of sanctity, now in course of publication by the Congregation of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, and we cordially recommend it to the Faithful, as calculated to promote the glory of God and of His Saints, the increase of devotion, and the spread of our holy Religion.

Given at Westminster, the Feast of the Nativity of our B. Lady, A. D. 1851.

N. Card. Wiseman

TO

THE REGULAR CLERGY

OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND,

THE CHILDREN

OF ST. BENEDICT AND ST. BERNARD,

ST. DOMINICK AND ST. FRANCIS,

AND THE SONS

OF THE HOLY IGNATIUS,

THE GREAT MASTER OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

AND THE NURSING-FATHER OF SAINTS AND MARTYRS,

WHO,

IN THE STRAITNESS AND NEGLECT

OF THEIR UNHONOURED CLOISTERS,

OR THE CHEERLESS SOLITUDE

OF THEIR HIRED LODGINGS,

HAVE JOYFULLY EMBRACED THE POVERTY OF JESUS,

AND EARNED BY LOVING ZEAL

THE CROWN OF MARTYRDOM,

AND WHO,

THROUGH THE SCENES OF AWFUL SACRILEGE,

AND TIMES OF BITTER PERSECUTION,

THROUGH THE LONG AND WEARY VISITATION

OF ACTIVE MALICE OR OF COLD CONTEMPT,

HAVE PERPETUATED,

AMONGST THEIR UNWORTHY COUNTRYMEN,

THE BLESSED LINEAGE

OF THEIR HOLY FOUNDRESS.

ST. WILFRED'S,
FEAST OF ST. BERNARD,
M.DCCC.XLVII,

PREFACE.

The Life of S. Francis contained in this volume is from the French of Father Candide Chalippe. Its simple style seemed to make it agree better with the spiritual character of the series than the more poetical and striking work of Emile Chavin.

The Editors would be thankful for a translation of B. Colette's Life.

The Oratory. London.
Feast of our Lady's Expectation.
1852.

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ON

THE INTEREST AND CHARACTERISTICS

OF THE

LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

INTEREST AND CHARACTERISTICS

OF

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS,

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM MYSTICAL THEOLOGY.

BY F. W. FABER,

PRIEST OF THE ORATORY.

LONDON:

RICHARDSON AND SON, 172, FLEET STREET;

9, CAPEL ST., DUBLIN; AND DERBY.

M.DCCC.LIII.

TO

THE MOST EMINENT AND MOST REVEREND LORD,

NICHOLAS,

CARDINAL WISEMAN,

ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER,

WHOSE KIND ENCOURAGEMENT, VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS,

AND PECULIAR DEVOTION TO THE MODERN SAINTS,

FOSTERED THE BEGINNINGS, AND DEFENDED THE PROGRESS

OF THE ENGLISH SERIES OF THEIR LIVES,

THIS ESSAY

IS BY PERMISSION DEDICATED,

WITH SENTIMENTS OF AFFECTIONATE DEVOTION

AND PERSONAL ADMIRATION,

BY ONE WHO FOR SEVEN YEARS HAS BEEN ALLOWED

TO ENJOY THE PRIVILEGE

OF HIS INTIMATE KINDNESS, HIS WISE DIRECTION,

AND HIS PATERNAL RULE.

St. Mary's,
Sydenham Hill,
Feast of the Circumcision.
M.DCCC.LIII.

ON

THE INTEREST AND CHARACTERISTICS

OF THE

LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

THE Lives of the Saints form in Catholic countries a body of literature; this literature is distinguished by certain characteristic features of its own, and exercises a special influence. The number of these lives, the frequency of the new editions, and the testimony of those who are occupied either in the giving of retreats, the preaching of missions, or the spiritual direction of convents, all testify to the influence exercised by these biographies on the spiritual advancement of the faithful. No one who is at all familiar with spiritual books, can have failed to be struck with the number of interesting anecdotes which unite to prove the power of these lives for good, and their connection with the conversion of sinners, as well as the perfection of the chosen servants of God. This is an undeniable fact, and we must deal with it as a fact. Now the lives which exercise this influence in Italy, Spain, and France, are fairly represented by those which have been selected for this series, or rather the volumes

of this series those are very works themselves. It is another fact, therefore, that this series has done a great work already in other countries.

This gives rise to some reflections which it may be worth while to pursue. There are some whom these lives have disappointed, and some whom they do not interest, as well as those whom they may very naturally be expected to anger. It may seem strange that books which are read in Catholic countries with such avidity, and produce such abundant fruits of holy living, should seem dull, tame, and uninteresting to any Catholic reader, and we might be tempted to think the fault lay rather with the reader than with the lives themselves. Yet it may be that persons use what was intended for one object, for a wholly different one for which it was not intended, and this may explain the dulness which they complain of. Let us then see precisely in what these complaints consist. Let us see if we cannot afford to argue the matter in a good-humoured way.

In the Essay on Canonization prefixed to the first volume of the Life of S. Alfonso, a probable objection to the form of these lives was thus anticipated. (p. 48.) "It is this definite and orderly discussion of the theological and cardinal virtues which has impressed itself so completely upon the form and arrangement of modern Italian biographers; that fourfold division into facts, virtues, gifts, and miracles, which so entirely mystifies all chronology, and is mostly so teazing to English readers by its apparently awkward methodism. There can be no doubt but that Bacci's biography of St. Philip Neri would be far more life-like and captivating if it

were arranged in chronological order; the absence of this destroys all the light and shade of a life, and the development of a Saint is in itself, especially when he is a founder, of immense interest. But it may be questioned whether as spiritual reading and a *help to mental prayer*, a life written on the Italian method is not the best of the two." Neither were the words of the last sentence merely said at random, or in self-defence. They have no less an authority than the great Da Ponte, who thus prolongs one of the many digressions which destroy the literary interest of his famous life of F. Balthasar Alvarez (ii. 195): "It is true that in prolonging this digression I wander very far from my subject; but I think that *in these sort of works* one must look less to the method of writing than to the edification of the readers."

Now to speak of ourselves for a few moments; the object for which this series was started was not to help on the cause of Catholic literature; it was not merely to instruct or amuse; neither was it chiefly to draw men into the True Fold by the exhibition of the beauty of holiness; it was to furnish spiritual reading, in the technical sense of that term. It was to help on the practice of asceticism, and to assist those who should be lured by God's grace from precepts to counsels, from the world to the religious life, from ordinary attainments to the perfection which resides in generosity and interior mortification. It was for the refectory of the college and the convent, or for the secret spiritual exercises of the cell, or for the free-time of the Retreat, or for the bedrooms of those who live in the world with-

out loving it. It had no object patent and palpable to the world. It was to effect no great work, as great things are counted, nor to have to do with any particular movement, or set afloat any new spirit, or represent the genius of any peculiar school; it was to be a common-place contribution to the interior life, and it boasts of no more of a literary character than a new version of Thomas à Kempis, or a fresh arrangement of Piety Exemplified, or any one of those sober practical treatises which the modest diligence of the Ursulines of Black Rock may give to the Catholic public.

It is important to keep in mind the professed and almost exclusive object of the work, so as to see what objections to it are fair, and what are unreasonable. In truth, it has done more work, and filled a wider field, than was expected, though, as was hinted in the Prospectus, this has not taken us altogether by surprise; and it has, therefore, been noticed more than it deserved, and certainly more than it desired. This may have been good for its practical influence, but it has been unfortunate for its literary defects.

The original prospectus put forth three objects; the first and main one was spiritual reading, against "earthly principles and low views of grace;" the second was to make enquirers more "really in earnest about their souls;" the third was to spread "the honour and love" of the Madonna. Here is nothing grand, bold, or captivating; no literary view or intellectual design, but as humble and quiet a piece of work as a set of spiritual books

could chalk out for themselves. Bearing this in mind, let us now see whether the expectations the series has disappointed are not in reality hopes which it never held out, and prospects which it never wished to realize.

Five years ago it was considered necessary to put forward an Essay in defence of this series of lives, and while it was our duty to meet objections at that day of a different nature from those which are being urged now, we were led in explaining the *idea* of the series, as put forward in the original prospectus, to make some incidental observations, which bear so clearly on the present objections, that they would seem written for them. Thus (p. 80,) mention is made of the choice of translation, in spite of the "inevitable forfeit of pure style and spirited narrative." Again, (p. 82,) it is said: "The lives drawn up for or from the processes, were always to be preferred, although often with less literary attractiveness about them than lives written with more freedom. The object of the series is rather spiritual than literary, and as all masters of the spiritual life tell us that the biographies of the Saints should be read slowly, pausatim, and a little at a time, the style of the processes seemed in some degree more suitable." Again, in the same page, "Notes were to be avoided as much as possible, as so many vents of private opinion, and involving more or less the office of critic or censor." These quotations are not made as if to prove that the original idea was a good one, but to show what our friends perhaps overlook, that there *was* an idea to start with, and that it has at least been kept to with consistency.

And this is something, that we have kept to our idea.

It is clear there are different points of view from which we may look at the Saints, and one would be this. A Saint is raised up by God to do a definite work, very often it is a work of great magnitude and of historical importance, like the connection between S. Charles Borromeo and the Council of Trent, or S. Ignatius and Protestantism, or S. Vincent of Paul and the state of the French clergy. Or a Saint has to do with some particular spirit getting the mastery in the Church at a given time, as S. Alfonso with his moral theology, or S. Philip with his popular services and imitation of the ways of the primitive Christians. Or there is a suitableness between the foundation of a religious order, and the needs of the Church at that particular epoch, as in the case of S. Cajetan and the mixed life of which he showed the pattern to the Church. Or the servant of God is made a Saint by the abuses he has had to encounter, as the canonized kings of Bohemia and Hungary, or S. Pius V., the most rigorous of Pontiffs. All these things are of course deeply interesting, yet they can hardly be said to form spiritual reading; they belong rather to history, or to ordinary biography. They are not those fruits of holiness for which God has directed the Church to canonize the Saints, but rather the circumstances which they found favourable, or the difficulties which God blessed, to the exercise of virtue. They are deeply edifying and instructive, and the life of the Saint would not be a true one in which they were omitted, but they are the less

spiritual and the more historical part. It is a matter of indifference as to canonization, whether the circumstances which have called out the heroic exercise of patience and fortitude be the public calamities of the Church, as in the case of S. Athanasius, or of the state, as in the case of S. Louis, or whether it be the secret illtreatment of monastic superiors, as with S. John of the Cross, or a painful calumny believed by authorities at Rome, as with S. Joseph of Calasanctius, or the harshness of worldly parents, hardly known beyond the next street, as with S. Catherine of Siena. Canonization is not concerned with the historical interest or importance of the facts, but with given results of heroism, no matter under what pressure, or from what occasions.

This is the historical view of the Saints. Then there is the psychological view. A Saint exhibits a virtue in a particular way, as the hot-spirited Moses became the meekest of men, or he stereotypes a mental character on a whole order for generations, as S. Ignatius and S. Philip, or his prudence and wisdom are very peculiar and special, and thus interesting as a study as well as edifying as a lesson, as with the patriarch S. Francis, and later on S. Cajetan and S. Charles. Or, again, the peculiar difference of similar sweetness is interesting, as, for instance, the sweetness of S. Philip, S. Francis of Sales, and S. Vincent of Paul. Besides this, the private character of Saints who are historical personages, and play an important part before the world, is in itself interesting for this very reason, as the private life and devotional practices of S. Thomas of Canterbury, or S. Pius V. So the effects

of suffering, which have a great deal to do with the spiritual interest of the lives of the Saints, have likewise a deep psychological interest, as with S. Alfonso and S. Camillus. So also have the spiritualized reappearances of old professions in the converted lives of holy men, as the military traditions of S. Ignatius. Or natural temper comes out as when S. Philip by faith converts a Jew in S. John Lateran, while by faith S. Camillus turns a Jew somewhat roughly out of the diligence. So childishness may perhaps mingle with the childlikeness of the young contemplative Saints, or with the holy rudeness of the youthful martyrs to the tyrants, as if nature without fault would make a background the better to bring out the loveliness of grace, though we should shrink from judging so of any particular instance. So natural character tinges visions, gives a fashion to raptures, puts its own accent into supernatural voices, works miracles its own way, and even qualifies revelations. But in respect of canonization these are only accidental characteristics of the Saints, and though full of spiritual teaching, they are not the reasons for which the Church honours them upon her altars.

Even in the marvellous and more supernatural portions of hagiology, there is much which is psychologically interesting, without any reference either to mystical theology or to spiritual edification. The way in which nature mingles with the most uncommon gifts of God, and debases their operation, opens out to the philosopher a wide field for speculation, when he has once admitted the evidence of the facts as too clear and overwhelming to be gainsaid, without overturning all the laws and conditions of histo-

rical proof. Persons who take an interest in mesmerism and electro-biology are known to study these lives of the Saints, and to read them with great avidity, and it is quite conceivable that they would wish them to be written in a way which would bring out more distinctly this kind of interest. An instance of this may be found in the difference laid down by theologians between the spirit of prophecy and the prophetic instinct. "Sometimes," says St. Gregory the Great, "the prophets while they are consulted, *by reason of their frequent prophesying*, speak in their own spirit, thinking that they are speaking in the spirit of prophecy. But in order to prevent delusion the Holy Ghost quickly corrects them, and they hear from Him what is true, and blame themselves who have spoken falsely." This may be exemplified in what passed between David and Nathan in the second book of Kings. David said to Nathan the Prophet, "Dost thou see that I dwell in a house of cedar, and the ark of God is lodged within skins?" And Nathan said to the king :—"Go, do all that is in thy heart; because the Lord is with thee." But it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying :—"Go and say to my servant David;" and then follows the prohibition of building the temple, which is to be reserved for David's son and successor. According to St. Thomas, the spirit of prophecy, properly so-called, brings with it such complete certainty, that the prophet is assured that he cannot be deceived; whereas, the prophetic instinct is a blind feeling, which has no such clearness, and may often come, as is hinted by St Gre-

gory, in the words just quoted, from the mental results of a habit of prophesying.

There was a certain devout widow at Tivoli, in the seventeenth century, named Arsilia Altissimi, and her spiritual director was F. Niccolo Baldelli, of Cortona, a Jesuit. After her death he wrote an account of her graces, which was not published, but the MS. was lent to Cardinal Lambertini, when he was composing his great work on canonization, and he quotes many striking passages from it. F. Baldelli notices particularly the difference between the spirit of prophecy and the prophetic instinct. He says :—"Perhaps it is thus, that it has sometimes happened that different persons have published contradictory revelations, as, for example, that the Blessed Virgin was, and was not, conceived without original sin; one only of these had received a true revelation, the other believed he had it, but in truth had spoken only of his own spirit, and not by inspiration of God. In the same way, when the light of prophesy is imperfect, the prophet may be moved to conceive internally, and to speak, or do something which God wills to be a symbol or sign of future things, without his understanding the true meaning of the matter, which he conceives, speaks, or does, as was the case with Caiphas, of whom St. John says, 'that being the high-priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation.' And this prophetic light was in him only an instinct to speak materially these words :—'It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.' And this, as St. John says, 'he spoke not of himself,' and as St.

Thomas teaches, he did not even understand what he was saying, neither did he at all pretend to prophesy, as St. Augustine observes."

There is a very famous instance of this in the failure of St. Bernard's Crusade, on which Benedict XIV., comments as follows. The passage is altogether too interesting to be abridged.

"S. Thomas having said that it is not perfect prophecy, but the prophetic instinct, when a man is moved by God, and knows not that it is God who moves him, makes this golden observation: There is no contradiction in this that the revelation should be true and from God, and the human explanation of it false, for man may interpret it otherwise than God understands it. Lewis the Younger, king of France, made known to the princes of the realm his desire of proceeding to the Holy Land, and sought their consent: they determined to refer the matter to S. Bernard, the abbot. The abbot was sent for, and he thought that a matter of such moment should be referred to the decision of the Pontiff. The Pope, Eugenius, greatly praised and approved of it, and gave him authority to preach and rouse the minds of all, for he was looked upon as an apostle or prophet by all the people of France and Germany. Wherefore, not only in the empire, but in the neighbouring kingdoms, in Western France, England, and Hungary, people and nations were stirred up to assume the cross, and enrol themselves in that sacred army, as Otho tells us at length. The expedition, which was confirmed by signs and miracles, came to a disastrous end, and the Christian soldiers perished, defeated by the infidels, by the just judg-

ment of God, and S. Bernard, whom before all men honoured exceedingly, was condemned as an impostor and a false prophet. He thus writes on the subject: 'If one of two things must take place, then I prefer that men should murmur against us, and not against God. It is good for me that He is pleased to use me as a shield. I am ready to receive all the biting reproaches of my accusers. We said peace, and there was no peace; we promised good things, but behold confusion.' He then says in his own defence: 'As if we had acted with rashness or levity in the matter! We went forward openly in it, not as if it were a doubtful matter, at thy bidding, (namely, Eugenius the Pope,) or rather at the bidding of God through thee.' Then stating the reproaches of the people; 'Whence can we know that the word has gone forth from our Lord; what miracles dost thou do that we may believe thee?' He answers as follows, addressing Eugenius: 'It is not for me to reply to this, spare me. Answer thou for me, and for thyself according to what thou hast seen and heard.' In these words he modestly admits that he had wrought miracles in confirmation of his preaching. No question could, or can be raised as to the truth of the revelation and prophecy, but the most high and unchangeable truth of God was not understood by man; the counsel of men was one thing, that of God another; men had proposed to themselves as their object the subjugation of Jerusalem, for their thoughts are of the earth, glory, and wealth; and God, the eternal saltion of those who, in that expedition, had died for the faith and the Church. John, the venerable

abbot of Casamare, made the matter known to S. Bernard in a letter, in which he writes thus: 'I have been informed, my most dear brother, that thou art greatly grieved at this affair—I speak of the expedition to Jerusalem—that it has not prospered according to thy wish, and that the Church and glory of God have not increased as thou desiredst.' Then saying that the matter succeeded not according to the wishes of men, but the counsel of God, he thus proceeds: 'But do not doubt what I am going to say; I make it known as to my spiritual father in confession. The patrons of this place of ours, the Blessed John and Paul, have frequently visited us, and I have questioned them on this subject; they replied and said, that a multitude of angels who had fallen have been restored in the persons of those who fell there.' Cardinal Bona applies this fact of S. Bernard to confirm the subject of which we are now treating. Gravina, in discussing how false visions and revelations may be discerned from the true, vindicates the prediction or prophecy of S. Vincent Ferrer, concerning the end of the world and the coming of antichrist. S. Antoninus, too, may be consulted on the subject of that prophecy."—vol. iii. pp. 201—4.

Precisely the same phenomenon which we have observed in prophecy is equally to be discerned in the matter of visions and of private revelations, which last partake of the nature of prophecy. Theologians teach that holy persons may see and hear in visions and divine locutions, according to the predispositions of their intellect and will. Their spiritual director is of a particular school of the-

ology, or they themselves belong to a religious order which has pet opinions, or they are attached to certain pious and permitted opinions and practices, which are not defined or commanded by the Church; or they have fixed ideas in their imagination, or vivid pictures of a favourite mystery, which pictures through frequent prayer have beome habitual with them; and all these things tell upon their visions and revelations. Thus Eusebius Amort thinks that if revelations are very theological, they ought to be suspected. No one (we do not mean by this to anticipate the judgment of the Church, yet pending, but) no one can read the revelations of Sister Mary of Agreda, without seeing how full they are of the technicalities and minute subtleties of the Scotist theology. S. Bridget says that our Lord had a garment on when he was scourged. Suarez following several of the ancient fathers, writes against this revelation; and Hurtado simply observes that S. Bridget no doubt said so because she knew that criminals who were to be crucified had usually one garment left on them. Lancisius, speaking of the supposed revelation of S. Catherine of Sienna, against the Immaculate Conception, says that it did not come from the Spirit of God, but from her own understanding, as one of the spiritual children of the Dominicans, from whom she had learned it. And he adds: "We must know that when pious persons, abstracted from the senses, speak, they frequently speak of their own understanding, and are sometimes deceived. This is certain, and persons experienced in these things know it, and it is clear from authentic ecclesiastical histories, and I could name

some holy women, canonised by the Apostolic See, whose sayings and writings in rapture, and derived from raptures, are filled with errors, and therefore not allowed to be published." It is not out of place to remark on this that there is really no proof of S. Catherine having ever put forth such a revelation. S. Antoninus mentions that such an one was attributed to her ; but it does not exist in the collection of her revelations made by her confessor, the Blessed Raymond of Capua : and Cardinal Gotti and Martin del Rio pronounce it to be apocryphal, and to have crept in in later times, probably to serve a controversial end.

So far, therefore, as literary and intellectual interest is concerned, it may at once be granted that lives of the Saints written from an historical or a psychological point of view, are far more captivating and will influence controversially far more readers, and so will be more obviously telling, than lives written in the style of those which compose this series. Moreover, it would be a very important thing that they should be so written. Neither would translation, except in a very few cases, be the successful mode of bringing them before the public. They must be written by a native of the country for which they are intended, shaped for the taste of that country, directed against its prejudices, or moulded to them, abridged in one part, amplified in another, and interspersed with reflections or conclusions suited to the genius of the national mind. Simply as literature, the present series of lives could not stand by the side of them. If men want to pass away a few hours

in reading less grave than history, and less light than fiction, or if they want to improve their minds, and get edification at the same time, or if they desire to catch the spirit of a particular epoch of the Church or a special religious order, or, which is commonest of all, to spend time on a book which shall lead them on and entertain them like the life of Wellington and Nelson, and yet let them feel or fancy that their interest has all the while been in religion—then such literary lives of the Saints would be just the books for them. The external charities of our dear S. Vincent of Paul, would be extremely and profitably interesting to many a reader, who would find a minute description of his method of prayer insufferably prosy and dull. The dashing boldness of S. Ignatius would fix attention, where the secrets of his spiritual life would repel it. The acute government of the Society of Jesus by the Venerable Vincent Caraffa, would engage readers, to whom his curious and marvellous practice of the presence of God would seem so much puerility and trash, or, at best, matter for confession, but unworthy as material for biography. For the practice of the Presence of God was his special gift, in which he seemed to surpass S. Peter of Alcantara, of whom it is said, in the Report of the Cause of his Canonization, that his love "is inferred from the way in which he perseveringly kept his mind intent upon God, so that he scarcely ever departed from a sense of His Presence, from divine meditation and prayer, like ardent lovers, who day and night think faithfully and intently of the beloved object. This is moreover confirmed by the efficacious purpose and

continual care he maintained of himself, and his actions and thoughts, so as not to offend God, whom he loved so much ; of which amongst other proofs he gave this, that for three consecutive years he always walked with his eyes shut, that he might not behold anything to occasion his offending God, or to distract his sense of God's presence." Furthermore, lives written on this plan would be very effective as weapons of controversy. They would allay irritation, subdue prejudice, invite attention to Catholic doctrine, and settle satisfactorily many of the preliminaries of conversion ; and he would do a great work for the Catholic body in this country, who would embark in such an undertaking.

But it may be objected: "Do you mean to say, then, that the lives of the Saints would be less spiritual if they were more interesting? Does their being interesting destroy their spirituality?" Certainly not. But they would be less spiritual if more interest of a foreign kind, whether historical or psychological, were introduced into them. What would make them more interesting to you perhaps would make them less spiritual, because their spiritual character is what interests you least. To you the life of the Saint is the pill which you can only swallow when it is disguised with the life of the great man. The secret training through which the Holy Spirit led his soul is only tolerable so far as it is intellectually connected with his exterior actions; and the fine shades of difference in the exercise of virtues, as between the faith of S. Jane Frances de Chantal, and the faith of S. Camillus of Lellis, is not discernible by you, because it is not a matter

which you happen to be interested in. But then another man may reasonably say, Well! you have your taste, and I have mine. To me it is a matter of little moment how F. Caraffa governed the Jesuits, but every word dropped ever so casually about his practice of the Presence of God, interests me immensely. I get a little tired with all the orders, confraternities, asylums, associations, schools, orphanages, and missions of the great apostle of Paris ; but what there was in his exterior life, which without miracles could make him so great a saint, and keep him recollected when he was always so busy,—this is what interests, arrests, fascinates me. St. Ignatius, starting from Paris like a knight-errant, in search of spiritual adventures, is tame to me, compared with St. Ignatius preparing his points for meditation over-night, years after God had given him the gift of infused contemplation. The fact is, no one is to blame ; neither you nor the lives of the saints. You have simply taken them for something they do not profess to be ; it is a body of literature with which you happen to be only partially, very partially in sympathy. If you want to read the Life of a saint and can get none but these, you must read the chronological part, and skip the virtues. All I complain of is, that you are a little unreasonable: you take up a Blue Book at your spare moments, and then wonder it does not lead you on like Guy Mannering. Yet if you were on a committee of the House, or had got some hobby about education, or the prevention of crime, or the working of secondary punishments, the Blue Book would become a luxury, and Guy Mannering an

impertinence. If you read these lives of the saints with any other view than to BECOME THEREBY MORE CLOSELY UNITED WITH GOD, I should have thought they were of all books the most uninteresting.

Without stopping to enquire whether the objector would be content with this answer, it is plain that to dispose of the objection satisfactorily, we must come to a clear understanding about the nature of spiritual reading. And first, what spiritual reading is not. It is not the mere reading of books about God and religion, because they interest us, and at our own discretion, and with no particular reference to our spiritual condition at the time. Religious reading is not what is technically meant by spiritual reading. Spiritual reading, then, is a devotional exercise, to be performed at a fixed hour and for a determined time; it has to be done in a particular way, for which the saints have laid down rules, as that it should be a little at a time, read pausingly, interspersed with ejaculations, and, which is observable, some have recommended, first that it should not be in a book which attaches the intellect; and secondly, that a book should not be read quite through, in order to lose the intellectual interest which completeness might give. This last was the rule of F. Consolini, the friend of S. Philip, and the first novice-master of the Oratory. It is to stand in the same relation to our daily mental prayer that the can of oil stands in to the lamp; it is as much as possible to bear on the subject of our particular examen of conscience at the time, the vice we are trying to eradicate, or the virtue we are endeavouring to naturalize in ourselves; it should run, there-

fore, rather in subjects, and portions of books, than in authors and whole works: and, for the most part, it should be under the guidance of a spiritual director, and limited by his choice. It is medicine, and so we must not quack ourselves, and take it out of our own heads.

Thus, saints have been formed by the imitation of Kempis; S. Francis of Sales was formed, if we may use such a word, on the Spiritual Combat of Scupoli; the Theatine spirit runs all through him; it is the spirit of the Congregations of the Church as distinguished from her Orders. Now, without foolishly comparing the one book with the other, it is plain the spirit of the two is very different, and we may give one to one person, the other to another, or both to the same persons at different times. Again, there are few persons to whom that inestimable treasure of the Church, Rodriguez's Christian Perfection, is not suitable; and few to whom Surin is suitable, or S. John of the Cross, or B. Henry Suso; and fewer still who could safely read Guillorè, or Tauler, or Cassian, or Baker's Sancta Sophia, or even some parts of Gerson: and to fix this or that particular book for this or that person, implies neither condemnation nor comparison of the works themselves. Religious communities, too, have their own ways. The beautiful spirit of the Visitation grows almost bitter and its superiors almost irritable at extraordinary ways of the spiritual life. S. Jane Frances, quite one of the most wonderful saints, said Rodriguez and Da Ponte were enough for her. So entirely is spiritual reading a daily exercise, having strict reference to our

spiritual condition and warfare at the time. It is part of a system, part of a day, and goes along with the meditation, the examen, the mortification, the intention of communion, and the ejaculation. And it is for spiritual reading, in this sense, that these Lives of the Saints are intended. Thus, to quote from Rodriguez, who in his treatise on prayer gives a separate chapter to spiritual reading, it was this exercise which S. Benedict ordered in his Rule; and of such importance did he account it, that he appointed two monks to go round the monastery at the fixed hour to see that everybody was "making" his spiritual reading; and one of the Rules of S. Ignatius is as follows: "The religious should twice a-day employ therein the time allotted for examen of conscience, for meditation, and *spiritual reading*, and with all possible care and diligence apply themselves thereunto in the Lord. And the superior, or spiritual prefect, is to take care that each one daily employs therein the time allotted for these exercises." And Rodriguez adds: "Hugo of S. Victor says that a servant of God was counselled by a revelation, to discontinue the reading of all sorts of intricate, or hard matters, and apply himself to read the lives of saints, and other books of the like nature; and that, by this means, he made very great progress in piety."

Mental prayer is worth very little, if it does not lead at once to mortification of the passions, and the acquisition of solid virtues. Yet it is hard to keep to this. The understanding is ready to range about as proud as a peacock and as pert as a magpie, in the limits of the subject to which we confine it; and

the imagination can easily run away with our good resolutions, and make poems of the composition of place. But the will is slow to be set on fire, as if it were very asbest ; and self-knowledge drains into us with an effort, and painfully, drop by drop. Hence the importance of succouring our prayer by the particular examen of conscience, and also by the fixed subject of our spiritual reading. Trying to be good is dry work, in the long run, when the effervescence of sensible fervour has done singing and sparkling. Its interest is simply from its importance, and only they who try can tell what a rigid, unamiable task-master is perseverance ; it makes life like a perpetual waiting all day to go out and watching for the dismal rain to have done, when in fact the day is not going to clear up at all. This is trying to be simply good ; to get up into the regions of God's merciful consolations, we must put more heart into our efforts, and aim a little higher.

When we think of imitating the Saints, and for an instant a flash of light passes before us and we dare to deem it possible, it is not the recollection of their miracles, or their ecstasies, or strange gifts, which after the momentary hope makes our hearts die within us. It is the staid perseverance, the lifelong effort, the continuous strain which cast us down and makes us feel how far off from our attainments is heroic virtue. F. Martin de Esparza, who wrote on the virtues, was also one of those whose suffrages on the cause of the Venerable Cardinal Bellarmine, were printed, and in it he speaks as follows : "It is not in holy confessors, as in martyrs, that heroicity of virtue is discovered in some one

or other exterior work, very arduous, difficult, and admirable, because such a particular act can seldom fall in the way of holy confessors, or of many of them, to do; and where it has fallen in their way, and they have done such things, they are not for that reason especially esteemed and reputed heroes of holiness, but because, before and after it, but particularly up to the time of their death, they have persevered in a continuous, uninterrupted course of innocency of life, doing everything according to the evangelical precepts and counsels, with those circumstances in each action which tend to the summit of perfection, as to their substance and manner, with a firm and intense contempt of all earthly things, and a corresponding adhesion to God and to things divine. Now this way of life, pursued uniformly and invariably for a long time, far surpasses the condition of human nature left to itself. That is truly invariable and inconstant for many reasons, but above all, because of the continual assaults of passions, conflicting at intervals with each other, yet always in league to seduce unto pleasure, and at last drawing men away from all virtue, much more from the highest degree of virtue. *Whereas that sublime and long unvaried rule of action doth so far transcend the condition of man's nature, that it approaches closely to the essentially changeless holiness of the Divine Nature, and therefore of itself suffices for evangelical heroicity, because it of itself constitutes a man perfect after the manner that our Father in heaven is perfect.* But in Bellarmine, so remarkably stainless was his course in such a life, and *so entirely perfect in each thing his mode of action*, almost from

mere infancy to his seventy-ninth year inclusive, the last of his life, that throughout that long time no one was able to discern in him any sin, even venial, with perfect deliberation, nor yet any trace of imperfection respecting the evangelical counsels or the rules of religion. There is no occasion to produce any single witness to prove this, because our whole summary is full of such panegyrics on oath, and others, not indeed on oath, but well worthy of belief, and certainly convincing, on account of the eminent qualities of the deponents. What can be said to the fact that in the general confession of his whole life, made upon his deathbed, the confessor could scarcely find sufficient matter for a valid absolution? This long course of action, therefore, and way of life, unstained, perfect, and exemplary in every condition, time, and place, does of itself prove conclusively the heroicity of all the virtues of Cardinal Bellarmine."

Yet, as if this unearthly perseverance were not enough to humble us to the dust, theologians must needs add to it the further quality of perseverance with facility and delight. Benedict XIV. speaks as follows: "We must also observe, that excellence in the virtues cannot be said to be proved by acts, *however manifold and heroic*, unless such acts were elicited *promptly, easily, and with delight*, as Scacchus shows at length, as follows: 'An ease and readiness in the power of producing virtuous acts is the mark and sign of a habit already acquired. Further, pleasure in producing the act is the mark of a habit already acquired, and intense in degree. Lastly, if with this pleasure there be united a sweetness felt

by any one in eliciting any act of virtue with a view to some supernatural end, prompted by charity, such sweetness and delight is a mark and sign of heroicity, which doth naturally cause a certain readiness and delight, together with sweetness, in the faculties producing special acts." In fine, to answer in the affirmative to a question as to the existence of heroic virtues, it is necessary that the hero should always have been the same, that is, that he should not have strayed from the path of virtue, as Cardinal de Aguirre teaches. 'But in whatever degree,' says he, 'heroic virtue is possessed, it not only does not permit any vice, or deliberate bad actions of any kind, but not even the omission of any action, most admirable and perfect, according to the several circumstances of person, time, and place, wherein it ought to be exercised. Wherefore it never allows of anything low, anything mean, or any even pardonable imperfection of manners, on full deliberation, but at all times and places retains that sublimity of soul, tending with all its might to the highest goodness, and to the following of God; although herein, as we have said, there are degrees, the highest, the middle, and the lowest, according to the highest, middle, and lowest intensity, more and more without any certain limit.' "

Now see how this bears upon the Italian method of writing the lives of the saints upon the processes for canonization. The spiritual reading of persons is to be directed to the acquisition of confidence in God, or of humility; and as example is so much more attractive than precept, they are referred to the lives of the saints. They have not to hunt about

for stray anecdotes, which they may or may not remember to have found scattered through the lives, a troublesome as well as distracting occupation. But they can see how confidence in God was practised by St. Jane Frances de Chantal, and then by St. Ignatius, and then by some contemplative nun in her interior trials, and then by some bishop with a set of disorderly clergy, or a missioner in the weariness of travel and imprisonment, or a novice under the little daily mortifications of community life; and the same with humility, and the other virtues. They can turn to it all, as easily as to an article in an encyclopædia, and see the various guidance of the Holy Ghost exemplified in the lively, real revelations of the heroism of the saints. The same method is equally convenient for the preacher with his sermons, or the novice-master with his conferences. It forms for all a sort of summary of spiritual theology, much more attractive than the mere rules of a spiritual treatise, and kindling in us all the while a more personal interest in those who have power in heaven, as well as a deeper veneration for them, and a more solid devotion to them.

How deeply does the practice of the invocation of saints enter into the spiritual life of the saints themselves, and how completely does the same practice lie almost unused upon the surface of the devout life of ordinary Catholics! It is astonishing how closely the invocation of the saints goes along with an interior spirit; though on first thought it would not have seemed likely. Indeed, this is one of many illustrations which might be brought forward, to show how much of the spirit of

holiness is concentrated with an especial power and vivid force, in what seem the accidental parts, or ornamental practices of the Catholic system, in those things which the world more particularly means when it uses the word "popery." Surely to us the anecdotes in the lives of the saints are not simply interesting, or instructive, or edifying; they are far more; they are voices to us from spirits who love us, and can aid us, and with whom we can enter into the closest relations of prayer, and who can do more for us in gaining the very virtue we are aiming at, than we can do for ourselves, because they can obtain for us greater grace. It was the very jealousy of this matter which filled the Spanish Jesuits with such suspicion of Father Alvarez's prayer of quiet. One of the Father Provincial's objections was, "It leads men to forget the Saints and vocal prayers." How many a man's daily communion with his angel, or his patron saint, or even the founder of his order, is nothing more than an ejaculated Ora pro me. How little does it enter with us, as it did with the Saints, into the substance and solidity of their devotion! And why? Because it is not so much that the Saints excelled us in love, as that they towered above us in their gift of faith.

The interest then which those who are fond of the lives of the Saints take in them is derived from two sources. One is the practical bearing of these biographies, as spiritual reading upon men's daily lives, their prayers, mortifications, self-knowledge, and devotional practises. Everything which forms an integral part of their self-discipline and their in-

tercourse with God, must of necessity be interesting to them just in proportion to their earnestness. How can that fail to interest them which has its place in each day's struggle, which is continually finding an echo in the wants and experiences of the inmost heart and conscience, or coming like a ray of light into dark places, or drawing us closer to our celestial guides and patrons? How can that be dull which is an earnest or a memorial of temptation resisted, of duty done, or of sin forgiven? How can those formal chapters which treasure up accumulated examples of one particular virtue seem tiresome, when the remembrance of them is so often, like another guardian angel, staying faithfully by the side of conscience all the day long, making men sweet-mannered, and gentle-worded, and bright-faced, when they would otherwise have been quick, or rude, or bitter, or sullen, while the anecdotes speak to us, like so many voices, one cheering on the other, and many doing what one would perhaps have failed to do. Ah! holiness is a life-long occupation. Each day has its work; each duty its temptation; each struggle its place in reference to the chain of graces compassionately intended for it. We cannot rest on our oars, and then resume our toil as before; the stream we are rowing against runs far too rapid for that. These lives of the Saints, therefore, are interesting in the same sense as meditation is interesting, or examination of conscience interesting, or preparation for confession interesting. Not that this is their sole interest; but it is their chief interest and their own peculiar kind of interest: a sober, solemn, practical, and constant interest, which wears well, and has to

do with the presence of God and the humiliation of ourselves; and the world has after all nothing worth talking about but these two things.

Yet it does not at all follow that, because spiritual reading is of so much importance, therefore everyone must have lives of the Saints for spiritual reading. There must be elbow-room for the taste of the individual in spiritual, as well as in other matters, perhaps even more than in other matters; and it is very far from our wish to convey the idea that those who find the lives of the Saints uninteresting are on that account wanting in holiness and the love of God. We are defending ourselves, not attacking others. There is abundance of spiritual reading besides the biographies of saints, though these last enjoy, beyond all other kinds, the advantage of the example and authority of the saints themselves. Only, men should not complain of the lives, because their taste is not satisfied in them, especially when they come to see that it is their own mistake to have looked for what they want in the wrong place. And after all, are they not losers by this taste of theirs? just as a man is a loser who has no eye for scenery, or no ear for music, or no appreciation for some one of the fine arts? they have a source of pleasure and of profit less than we; we have an instinct and a sense more than they. It may be that it only accidentally helps to make us better; but that is a great thing of itself, and then there is the enjoyment of our additional sense beside.

It is of importance to get this view well into our minds. Men, especially when they have a favourite pursuit, are apt to attribute a certain moral ex-

cellence to the taste for it and the enjoyment in it. Yet this is very narrow-minded; for it is a bad argument which would maintain that a particular medicine must be good for every one, because it has been good for us. God in the abundance of His mercy lets all things do us good; and so when we interest ourselves in some special thing for His sake, He blesses it to be a means of grace to our souls. He condescends to do our will and to go our way, so long as it be His glory in which we are allowed to interest ourselves. We shall forfeit this blessing, if we set ourselves up as a rule, or sit in judgment on others, who may make less demonstration for God, and yet be far more generously and unreservedly His in heart. There can be no question that the "turn" for hagiology, and those provinces of ascetical and mystical theology which belong to it, is a peculiar taste, or sympathy; and one alas! which is easily separable from quiet, firm mortification of ourselves, from real enlightened austerity of life, or painstaking struggle for solid and unostentatious virtue; just as a taste for dogmatic theology is no evidence of an earnest desire to save our souls. How many faults should we escape if we did not make little Catholic churches of ourselves, to give the rule to others! How much more of honest joy and graceful pleasure should we have in the good which others do, how much more helpful sympathy in their works and enterprises, how much more of hopeful interest and of sanguine diligence and of easily satisfied contentment in all the little ventures men are making round us for the glory of God and the saving of dear souls,—if only we re-

remembered that all works are good which we do not know to be spoiled by self-love, and we only know this of our own, and if, moreover, we persuaded our good angel ever to be whispering to us that God's "commandments are exceedingly broad," and that we cannot "run the way of those commandments" until He "enlarge our hearts."

But although this practical interest is the chief one which many take in the Lives of the Saints, there is another which if less important, is still more various and fertile, and arises from many sources. When a man has given himself up to the service of God, and is penetrated with that contempt of the world and its pursuits, which must come at last from assiduous meditation on eternal truths, then the character of God, the occupations of the next world, the interest of souls, the secrets of the spiritual life, the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the fathoming of His mysteries, become the absorbing passion of his soul: though he may exhibit that passion in a diversity of ways. Just as a man in the world with an engrossing pursuit lays hold of everything which illustrates or tells upon his favourite occupation with a vivacity which astonishes others, as he finds meanings in things, or puts interpretations upon them which one not possessed with the same ruling idea would never dream of, so is it with the spiritual man. He finds much in the Lives of the Saints, which he perceives at once is, in his case, admirable rather than imitable; but it is not on that account without deep interest to him, nor yet without practical interest to him, as it leads him to a more fervent love of God, and to more

frequent and heartfelt adoration of His unspeakable compassions. Lives which are to others a mere glare of visions, ectasies and revelations are to him full of wisdom and of teaching; they join themselves on to other things; they confirm or bring out divine truths; and they seem to make us better acquainted with God, our dear Lord, and our future companions in bliss; and they either create or deepen a devout and joyful wonder, full of the savour of Divine Wisdom, and of that spirit of understanding, which is a gift of the Holy Ghost, the joy of contemplation, and a foretaste of the life of the angelic spirits.

Nay, even this feeling of wonder caused by these things in the Lives of the Saints, is akin to a high gift. If God so wills, it may soon pass on to that admiration which suspends the soul in contemplation. St. Augustine and the mystics who follow him, make this wonder to be of the essence of contemplation, and all the schools admit that it is a property of it. "The spirit of man," says St. Bonaventure in the Itinerary, "is not freed in eternal things by meditation, nor does it repose in them, until by contemplation what it sought is shown to it; but as soon as it has found what it sought, the spirit by a kind of acquaintance, fastens on it with admiration, and then meditation has passed into contemplation." But long before that, the humble wonder which the Saints' lives excite in us will enable us to find in them, what St. Augustine says the same wonder helps us to find in Scripture. "For admiration rouses the desire to draw that, which causes us to wonder, and it is in this way that the

spirit of man, sounding the depths and sublime mysteries, couched beneath the language of the prophets, draws Jesus Christ out of the secret places of the Holy Scriptures, as the fisher draws the fish with line and hook." There is a great blessing in seeking Him, a greater blessing in finding Him; and what more practical than to be blessed by Him, whether we seek Him and seem to find Him not, or find Him because we have sought Him, or find Him where we never dreamed of seeking?

S. Gregory the Great thus speaks of this wonder, and of the true worship which it contains. (Morals. ii. 10.) "It is after another manner that the angels speak to God, as in the Apocalypse of God they say, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom; for the voice of the angels in the praises of God is the very admiration itself of inward contemplation. To be struck dumb at the marvels of Divine Goodness is to utter a voice, for the emotion of the heart excited with a feeling of awe is a mighty utterance of voice to the ears of a Spirit that is not circumscribed. This voice unfolds itself as it were in distinct words, while it moulds itself in the innumerable modes of admiration. God, then, speaks to the angels when His inner will is revealed to them as the object of their perception; but the angels speak to the Lord when by means of this, which they contemplate above themselves, they rise to emotions of admiration."

We can but allude briefly here to these various sources of interest, which many find in the Lives of the Saints: and find in them, be it re-

membered, in proportion to the bold keenness and childlike simplicity of their faith. Surely in these days when the truths of God are "diminished" among the children of men, we may say that the first thing we need is faith, and the second thing faith, and the last thing faith also. The heart of charity waxes cold, and the arm of hope numb, in proportion as the eye of faith grows dim.

It may sound like a contradiction or a conceit, yet in truth there is nothing which so brings home to us the beauty, the glory, and the security of faith, as the study of the wonders in the Lives of the Saints. Ecstasies are nothing to the magnificence of faith; visions are less clear than the light of faith, less meritorious, less worthy of God and less dear to God; strange heights of prayer are but as mountains in the shade, compared to the soft misty brightness on the holy summit of pure faith. And yet this light of faith, with its privileged freedom from delusions, is open to us all, in the lowest walks of Christian precept and ordinary obedience. Faith by an intelligible exaggeration may be said to comprehend God; for it proposes Him to us simply as He is, simply as God, in all His vastness and variety of divine perfections, whereas a vivid glimpse of some one attribute is all that is accorded to a vision. When God speaks to us by faith, says S. Francis of Sales, He does it in the way of inspiration. In this life we cannot know God as He is, neither by vision nor rapture: but by faith we at least believe in Him as He is, and we can do Him no higher honour while in this state of pilgrimage. This has been well stated by F. Nouet

(Conduite. i. 94). He says; "We cannot obtain perfect union, which is the end of prayer, except in two ways. One by the light of glory which makes us see God clearly, uniting that adorable object to our understanding without intervening medium and without species. The other by a light of grace, which serves to dispose and prepare us for this sovereign happiness. Now among all the means which prepare us for it, that which has most proportion and resemblance to the light of glory, is the light of faith, which S. Thomas calls on that account a ray, a spark, an outflow, a participation, of the beatific light. For all the consolations, all the sensible devotion, all the visions, revelations, interior words, and in fine, all that the understanding can conceive, all that the will can taste, all that the imagination can picture to itself, all that the appetite could desire, all that the senses could take in, have no proportion with God. God is in nowise that which all this represents to us. He is infinitely above it all. Faith is the one thing which proposes Him to us as He is, and it has this resemblance to the light of glory, that it believes God such as He is, while the other sees Him clearly such as He is. Hence comes the great credit which faith enjoys with God, who can refuse nothing to prayer made in the light of an heroic faith. This ought wonderfully to console those who have no sublime elevations of spirit in prayer; for even those who have them, if they wish to go to God in the way at once most lofty and most secure, must raise themselves above all these extraordinary favours, and walk by the

path of faith, that through darkness they may reach light, and by blinding themselves they may be illuminated." It is well to bear this in mind, now that we are going to speak of the sources of interest there are in the admirable and less imitable portion of the Lives of the Saints.

1. The first source of interest is in the variety of the ways in which God vouchsafes to lead the souls of His servants, disposing all things so strongly and yet so sweetly. The harmony which there is in all their ways, even in those that seem to contradict each other, brings out the difference between divine wisdom and the maxims of the world, and fills the soul with a sense of joyous wonder. Just as upon sanctifying grace, set in motion by the visitations of actual grace, the whole structure of Christian ascetics is raised, so upon the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, called out by the actual impulses of the same Blessed Spirit, the spiritual man beholds three marvellous temples rise, the temples of mystical theology, full of supernatural lights, and hung over with glittering trophies of the Saviour's love, and beautified by innumerable and varying reflections of the Divine Perfections.

As in the ascetical, so also in the mystical system, the three theological and the four cardinal virtues, are the seven pillars of the temples; only they are elicited or exercised in a different way. As this matter is somewhat important, and throws great light on the lives of the Saints, as well as makes several remarks in this Essay more clear, we may be excused for drawing it out at some length. The Catholic writers on the virtues seem for the most

part to follow the teaching of Plato, rather than that of Aristotle, so far as regards the cardinal virtues. That great philosopher divided them into the civil virtues, the virtues of purification, the virtues of the purified soul, and the virtues of the ideal Goodness, which is God. So S. Thomas illustrates the four cardinal virtues as civil virtues, by the following references : Prudence, 3 Kings, iv. 29; Justice, Ps. lxxi. 1 2 ; Fortitude, Ecclus. vii. 6; Temperance, Eccles. x. 17:—as virtues of purification ; Prudence, Prov. iii. 13, Matt. x. 16. Temperance, Tobias iii, 16, Job xxxi. 9 10 ; Justice, Eccles. iv. 33 ; Fortitude, Tobias v. 13. And these last enter into the notion of the heroic exercise of virtue, as well as those of the purified soul, which belong to the highest Saints, though this is contrary to the opinion of some writers.

Our readers must kindly bear with this dry statement, which may be illustrated first of all, by what is said by F. Antonio Gonzales, the Dominican, who wrote a dissertation on the virtues of S. Rose of Lima. His words are given in Benedict XIV. Having premised that heroic virtue is a certain eminence of virtue in its highest degree, and having divided the virtues into those of the civil class, of purification, and of the purified soul, and having observed that ordinary virtue corresponds to the *via purgativa*, virtue of purification to the *via illuminativa*, and virtue of the purified soul to the *via unitiva*, he concludes as follows : " We infer from hence, that virtue in the path of illumination is not heroic, inasmuch as it acts not with readiness and delight, but with diffi-

culty, because of the indolence of the will, which is not yet inflamed by the ardent union of love. Only, therefore, virtue in the state of union, has this facility, inasmuch as it worketh above the ordinary measure, easily, and without violence or opposition of the will. Wherefore, just as any virtuous man ordinarily acts in things of small and trifling account, so he who has attained to the happy state of union, deals with things most difficult, for the love of God, with continual readiness, with a tranquil mind, and as it were, naturally. Accordingly S. Thomas and other authors say that heroic virtue does not belong to the process of purification, but to the purified soul; that is, it is virtue in the state of union. But the union with God, in which heroic virtue consists, is not that union which is ordinarily made by grace in the path of purification, but it is the mode of union that exists between the already purified soul and God, by a certain substantial contact, whereby He is felt to be present and united with it. Then does that union take place, when the spiritual powers of the soul, so far as the condition of this life permits, cling unto God; the intellect, too, by almost continual, and as it were, evident knowledge of Him; and, lastly, the will and the love not merely of desire, but, in a manner, of enjoyment, since it is the possession of God, although imperfect, because He is not clearly seen."

This is the one opinion; we may be allowed to call it the least probable. The opposite view is that the virtues of purification, although it is an imperfect state, may yet be heroic, and so sufficient for canonization. Cardinal de Laurœa says: "A

similitude unto Christ, which arises from the heroicity of virtue, does not consist in such an entire and perfect purification of the passions, that these are quiescent, without any perturbation at all, as they will be in the Blessed, and as they were in Christ our Lord, and in the Blessed Virgin ; also, this similitude unto Christ may consist in a certain relative purification, which, without taking away absolutely the fuel of sin, and the passions, restrains them so that they hardly rise at all, or very slightly." The Auditors of the Rota, in their report in the cause of S. Peter Regalati, write thus : "The virtues are possessed in two ways ; first, in a common and human way, and thus are the virtues called civil, as man is a social being ; secondly, in a way excellent and eminent, and as it were, divine ; and such virtues are called heroic or Divine. The way in which these heroic virtues are possessed is also two-fold ; one, when man is striving towards perfection, and thus are they purifying virtues ; the other when man has already attained to it as far as is possible in this life, and then they are called the virtues of a purified soul, like those of the most Blessed Virgin, and some who in the world have reached perfection. For the purpose of canonization, however, these virtues of a purified soul are not necessary, but it is enough that they should belong to the course of purification, *which are equally heroic.*" Cardinal Capisucchi, in his suffrage in the cause of the Venerable Bellarmine, and F. Garzoni, General of the Servites, in the same cause, maintain the like opinion in a very striking way ; so that Benedict XIV. thus sums up (i. 59) : "In a word, the readiness,

alacrity, and pleasurable feeling, requisite for a man to be said to work heroically, do not exclude the passions, but are compatible with them, and so much the more if they be in a low degree."

But we have stated above, and we know that we are not borne out in it by all mystical writers, that the edifice of mystical theology is built entirely upon the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Now the truth or falsehood of this view will depend in great measure on the question debated in the schools, whether in order to be exercised in an heroic degree, the virtues must necessarily have one of the seven gifts annexed to them, and accompanying them. Maderna admits that in our Blessed Lord all His operations were by the gifts of the Holy Spirit ; but that in the Saints these gifts only sometimes concur, and are not necessary to heroic virtue, because the intensity of a habit is of itself sufficient to produce the requisite ease, promptitude, and pleasurable feeling. Cardinal de Lauræa is not content with this, as he considers the intensity of the habit will not do all that is asked of it, and that there needs a new principle, higher, nobler, and more efficaciously exciting, and this can be nothing else but one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Benedict XIV. gives it in favour of the Cardinal's view, as being more in accordance with the mind of S. Thomas, and Rosignoli thus beautiful enforces it in his treatise on the discipline of Christian perfection. "Then doth God Himself alone move the mind of a man, not only by the infusion of the theological and moral virtues, but also by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are enumerated in the book of Isaias, wisdom, understanding,

counsel, fortitude, science, piety, and fear of the Lord, which are the most excellent supernatural habits, and always accompany charity. For although God always has an open entrance into the soul of man, by the infused virtues, whether theological or moral, yet for the exercise of the highest offices of virtue, He imparts to man those highest gifts, whereby, as it were by chains binding it to Himself, He turns the soul in all directions, whither He wills. Such as these the philosophers happily called heroic actions, or the actions of a purified soul. But the Holy Fathers called them spiritual, deific and Divine. For they which are breathed upon by this Divine Spirit, are not so much men, as in a manner gods; such as were so many patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and apostolic men, who by reason of these most admirable gifts, are looked up unto by mortals, as persons greater than ordinary, as heavenly men." Thus in the view of these actions, with which mystical theology is concerned, the gift of understanding must quicken the exercise of faith, that of fear the virtues of hope and temperance, that of wisdom the exercise of charity, while prudence calls in the gifts of science and of counsel, justice the gift of piety, and fortitude the gift which bears its own name. This theory will be found in practice to give out divisions and subdivisions of mystical theology, less teasing and less like faulty division, if we may venture to say so, than those followed by several mystical writers.

Now to return to our Mystical Temples. There is first of all the temple of prayer, the various kinds of contemplation, the ways of God dealing

with souls at prayer, and all those deeps of the hidden life which the spirit of man sounds and explores at prayer. There are many things there far above him who gazes; perhaps all of them are so. And yet they feed his soul, even while they kindle his desires; and he seems to be practising for heaven while he is learning love and awe amid the overpowering mysteries of that shrine; just as a child learns so much in the beauty of a church and before the burning lamp of the tabernacle, whose dread significancy he is yet too young to comprehend.

Then again there is another temple of the states of the soul, into which it pleases God to throw it; and this is hardly less marvellous than the first. Therein are all those mysterious purgations of the spirit and interior trials which are the preludes to the higher degrees of union with God, the espousals and the marriage of the soul.

Therein are the ten amazing lives of Divine Love, which St. Bernard, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure expound: the Salutary Languishing, Cant. ii. 5. the Unceasing Search, Ps. civ. 4. the Persevering Labour, Gen. xxix. 20. the Unweary Endurance, Matt. v. 10. the Impatient Desire, Ps. lxxxiii. 2. the Swift Course, Ps. cxviii. 32. the Vehement Daring, Ps. lxxii. 25, 26. the Indissoluble Binding, Phil. i. 21. iii. 20. Gal. ii. 20. the Burning Sweetness, Ps. xxxviii. 4. and last of all the Perfect Similitude, 2 Peter i. 4.

Therein are souls likened to the Passion of their Lord, with wounds and crowns, which are sometimes visible in their bodies, and sometimes are known only to themselves. There, too, are lives,

which live on the Blessed Eucharist alone, for like our Lord, they have other food that those around them wot not of. There are persons reduced to the simplicity of our Saviour's Holy Childhood, like Sister Margaret of Beaune, M. Olier, and some others. There, too, are the wounds of love, its chains, its langours, its swoons, its unions, of which mystics tell us. It would be endless to enumerate them all. But to him who looks on these things from far off, and turns dizzy at the view, how dwarfed does all the world appear, how weak the bands of temptation, like the mere withs that Sampson snapped, and how full of rest, inexplicable rest, is the thought of God, and of God's delight to be with the children of men.

Then there is the third temple, the museum of the gifts of God. There are visions, raptures, extacies, flights, glories, healings, tongues, prophecies, discernments of spirits. There are strange graces which have no name. There also is the visible companionship of angels, and their sensible presence; there, too, are Divine locutions of various kinds, which S. John of the Cross has classified. There also are gifts whereby the senses can tell, nay, as in S. Pascal's case, inanimate relics, where the Body of Jesus is in the Blessed Sacrament. There also are the delicate operations of the five spiritual senses, the taste and touch of the will, and the sight, hearing, and smell, of the understanding, of which the mystics record such transporting effects.

This is one of the most difficult points in mystical theology, and one about which writers

most of all contradict each other. One thing, scholastic philosophy, to which mysticism must after all submit, imperiously requires, that these exterior senses should not be considered distinct faculties from the memory, understanding, and will. The doctrine seems to have come first from the book De Spiritu et Anima, so long attributed to S. Austin.

Those who wish to pursue this interesting subject will find the true doctrine in S. Bernard's book on the nature of Divine Love. But the text book of all the modern mystics has been S. Bonaventure's Seven Paths to Eternity, particularly the sixth path. Da Ponte's general Preface on Mental Prayer, prefixed to his Meditations, and the thirteenth chapter of the third treatise of Scaramelli's Direttorio Mistico, may be consulted with advantage. Boudon, in his Kingdom of God, might mislead by his phraseology, as, what he means by the interior senses are only four, and are the common sense, the imagination, the "estimative" faculty, and the memory, and have nothing in common with the senses we speak of. But to return.

These are the beautiful things of love, the heavenly profusion of the Spouse of Souls, whereon the reader of the lives of Saints is called to gaze; and what is the effect which they have upon him? He looks upon them from afar; by those heights he measures the lowness of his own attainments; he does not covet to be where he knows full well he should but turn dizzy and fall; on the contrary, he blesses God who has led him of little faith by the common ways, yea, if so be, by the very commonest

of common ways. But he has seen enough for a great work in himself; enough for a contempt of himself he would once have thought unreal; the power of the world over him has gone; scenes or things which once teased or interested him are now as nothing to him; they hardly cross his thoughts. He has seen God at work in His most honoured yet secret laboratory, the souls of saints; he has had glimpses and realizations of another world, and they have purified his spirit, killed old passions, sown fresh loves, and have made a new man of him, because, above all other effects, the sight and knowledge of these things have humbled him exceedingly, these three temples of Prayer, and States, and Gifts.

When we speak of the dependence of all the supernatural visions and revelations of the Saints upon scholastic theology, we must not be understood to rule it absolutely, for that would be going beyond the moderation of theologians themselves. It is difficult to speak too strongly on the subject, because of the countless delusions which haunt the higher walks of the spiritual life, yet to make the rule absolute would be a dangerous exaggeration. Hurtado wrote a tract on the crimes which generate a suspicion of unsoundness in the faith, and in it he says, speaking of private revelations. "A revelation which is against the common opinion of the fathers and theologians is not for that reason diabolical, but nevertheless it requires greater attention and a more severe examination." Del Rio, in his disquisitions on Magic, a book which may be recommended to the perusal of those who are interested in mesmer-

ism, admits that there may occur in the private revelations of the Saints some things inconsistent with reason and truth, according to the common opinion of theologians, but he says, "We deny that there is anything in their revelations which is plainly contrary to the sincerity of the Catholic faith, or which cannot be reconciled with it. If anything should perchance contradict the more general opinion of the schoolmen, it is not therefore to be condemned at once as erroneous; for, piously and prudently understood, it may be established on the authority of approved writers and sound reason."

Benedict XIV. quotes Matteucci as teaching that a private revelation is not to be considered false, because it involves even circumstances about our Blessed Lord or our dear Lady which are not in Scripture, tradition, the definitions of the apostolic See, or the writings of the Fathers; for he maintains, that the definitions of the popes, fathers, or theologians, are not contradicted by doctrines explaining what those definitions neither explain nor contain, and that there is nothing strange in a private person having a revelation on a matter not decided by the Church. To illustrate his meaning, he puts the dispute between the Thomists and the Scotists, whether if Adam had not sinned Christ would have come in virtue of the present decree, and he says there is no reason why we may not suppose that God should reveal the true answer to any one. But then he objects to himself, may I not be accused of novelty of doctrine? To this he replies, that "that kind of novelty is to be avoided, which introduces new doctrine, which enjoins another faith, and

another rule of life, or breaks up Christian discipline, or is hurtful to the salvation of the souls, and tends to their destruction."

The great pontiff, Benedict XIV., who is our guide in all questions of this nature, the St. Thomas of canonization, speaking of the same charge of novelty of doctrine, says, (iii. 369,) "Our faith, indeed, as to its substance, has not increased, although now some things are explicitly believed, *which formerly were not known.*" S. Thomas, in the Secunda Secundæ, asks, whether the articles of the faith have increased in the course of time, and gives the following answer: "As to the substance of the articles of the faith, there is no increase of them in the course of time, for whatever later generations believe was contained, though implicitly, in the faith of the fathers who have gone before us. But as regards the explanation, the number of the articles has increased, because some things are explicitly known to later generations, which to former generations were not explicitly known."

There are some curious instances of revelations at issue with theology given by Gerson in his tract on the Humanity of Christ. When the revelations of Sister Mary of Agreda were examined by the Holy Inquisition in Spain, F. Ossorio, a Jesuit, put in a celebrated suffrage which is quoted by Pope Benedict, wherein he maintains that certain discrepancies with scholastic theology, or the disclosure of things not contained in definitions, were no bar to the approval of the revelations of S. Bridget and S. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, and so can be none to the approval of those of Sister Mary of Agreda. On

the other hand Gravina, in his Lapis Lydius, and Arauxo, in his Moral Decisions, maintain that all revelations are to be rejected whereby a matter is said to be revealed, which is still matter of opinion, and not defined by revelation. It is plain that Benedict XIV. is of the contrary opinion.

But it is on the death-bed chiefly that the sweet variety of grace is manifested at once most openly and most affectionately. In the awfulness of the struggle, and all but in the presence of God's eternal judgments, the soul acts with the most unaffected solemnity, and the senses being deprived of their activity, really formed habits come uppermost and disclose themselves. Scacchus has a very striking passage about this in his Notes of Sanctity, (sect. 5. c. 6.) from which Benedict XIV. has drawn so largely. "In the last agony and struggle of the servants of God are clearly seen their habits of virtue, their desire of eternal, and contempt of temporal things; and on that account all that happens to them in the last moments of their life has to be carefully considered: namely, in the Acts of those devout men, whose worship, beatification and canonization the Church has to determine. For, as virtue is a habit, as we have already said and proved, and as the essence of virtue lies not in the act, but in the habit, as all theologians and philosophers teach, in the last agony, therefore, the acquired habit of virtue principally manifests itself and shines forth when the natural senses and natural powers, both interior and exterior, embarrassed by the strength of disease, are prevented from exerting their own functions. Then, indeed, we doubt not

that some acts, as it were involuntarily, proceed from habits acquired in the long practice of virtue, and, therefore, habits of virtue, already acquired, must be of necessity ascertained from the acts of that last agony. For this cause we say that the whole conduct of servants of God in their last agony must be considered, such as sayings, movements of the body, of the eyes, groans (if any) and other things separately, the words they utter against the enemy, and of exhortation to the bystanders, and finally, those, by which in dying, they commend themselves to God; so that not only the faithful may learn from their example, how to depart out of this world, but that we may be able to derive proofs from these signs, of the habit of the evangelical virtues, evangelical perfection and holiness."

This doctrine of Scacchus may minister consolation to some who have been afflicted by the circumstances under which their friends or relatives, recently converted, have died. Converts, professing a warm and ardent devotion to our Blessed Lady and S. Joseph, have drawn near their end, and in that last hour our Blessed Lady seems to be passed over, or certain adjuncts of Catholic devotion, such as the frequent sprinkling of the bed with holy water, not to be rightly valued. What was uppermost in their devotional conversation when well hardly makes its appearance at that solemn crisis, and the religious feelings actually expressed are such as might be expected from a pious Protestant dying in good faith, the desire of the Sacraments always excepted. We know the case

of a person who was supposed to be in his last agony, and who, during the few months which had elapsed since his conversion seemed to have a strong devotion to the Mother of God, and especially to her Immaculate Conception; and yet, when he was assured he had but a few minutes to live, and he was already facing, as best he could, the eternal judgments, he never called on our Blessed Lady, nor alluded to her existence. He seemed to see nothing before him but God, and what was distinct was rather even the Person of the Eternal Father than of our dearest Lord. Now this is often painful to Catholic friends. A cold chilling doubt comes, whether after all the faith of the departed was right, whether there were not some lingerings of old heresy, that evil spirit once exorcised, or whether from bad confessions or some secret fall in the incommunicable temptations of that last hour he had become Satan's prey, or whether he had not been insincere and hypocritical in his loud professions of orthodox devotion when in health. But these are only the cruel refinements of self-torture, which either excessive grief or wild affection wreak upon themselves. It is plain the true account of the matter is that these persons have not been long enough in the Church to have acquired complete habits of Catholic devotion; and just in proportion to their piety and devotion, according to their light, before their conversion, so will be the absorbing strength of the old habits and old traditions of their past religious life. Let it not be doubted that Mary may be at many a death-bed, assisting in all the plenitude of her

majestic love and her maternal rights, when not so much as her name trembles on the sufferer's lips; and that the evil spirits fly as truly from the drops of water wherein the might of the Cross and the benediction of the Threefold Name, and the hallowing of the Immaculate Church of Christ resides, though the faith of the dying man in these blessed helps has not yet passed into a formed habit, and so is now obscured by the mists of suffering and exhaustion. They who die brethren of Jesus must needs die in Joseph's arms; for the Lord's brethren must be Joseph's children; and the Guardian Angel will not forget to call him, though the sufferer may forget to invoke him, nor will the dear patriarch neglect the office to which Jesus has appointed him, because in the poor dying convert pain and weakness assert their empire, and the old memories rise up from hidden springs and inundate later ones. Nay, the Church too, sweet Mother, thinks lightly of the lips alone, and her golden key opens the treasure of indulgences to him who, in that last hour, has the names of Jesus and Mary in his heart, and has been in the habit of saluting them in health. Why should grief be curious to find a shallow in the unfathomable mercies of the hour of death? God is most present when most needed; and if His love is so prodigal, exuberant, and wonderful in less necessities, why should we dream otherwise than that it surpasses all comprehension in the greatest necessity of all? Think of Jesus, and it is easier to believe that many are saved who seem to make bad deaths than

that one was ever lost who made what looked like a good one.

Yet even when thus in the awful presence of their Judge, the Saints do not feel alike. There is no uniformity of awe and sacred fear, because of the dreadfulness of the crisis. The shape and fashion of their sanctity comes out with more individuality than ever; and the diversity of the operations of the Holy Ghost stands out before us, like an illumination. There is the famous case of St. Martin, which exemplifies the various, even opposite conduct, of the same virtue, the virtue of humility. When he came to die, Sulpicius Severus, his biographer, tells us that he said, "Lord! if I am still necessary to Thy people, I refuse not to labour: Thy will be done." The words have become a sort of proverb in the Church. Long after, St, Thomas of Villanova pronounced the following panegyric on the words of St. Martin: "O noble expression O! admirable charity! Did he say less than Moses or Paul? Moses prayed to be blotted out from the book of life for his people: Paul wished to be an anathema from Christ for his brethren; Martin, for the sheep committed to his charge, not only endures, but prays and entreats that he might be detained from glory. The glorious prelate had one foot already in Paradise, and he draws it willingly back, that he may serve his brethren. He had securely reached the desired shore; through love of his children he returns to sea, and for his beloved sheep, like a good shepherd, exposes himself again to the dangers of shipwreck." St. Thomas of Villanova comes to die himself, and Benedict XIV. tells us

out of the Bull of his canonization, that he also used the same words as St. Martin, though they are not recorded in F. Maimbourg's life of the Saint. When our own S. Philip came to die, the Bull of Canonization relates of him, that "when he was lying sick, and those who stood beside him begged him, at least for their sake, to pray to God in the words of St. Martin, Lord! if I am still necessary for Thy people, I refuse not to labour, he replied with the greatest humility, I am not St. Martin, neither have I ever thought myself such an one as he: if I thought I was necessary for you, I should believe myself to be lost." Look also at the death-bed of St. Francis of Sales, assisted by Father Fourier, provincial of the Jesuits in Lyons: "But though Fourier encouraged him again to recite the prayer of St. Martin, Lord! if I am still necessary for Thy people, I refuse not to labour, he never could be persuaded to use it: he replied, I am an unprofitable servant, unprofitable, unprofitable!"

So also we find another curious manifestation of humility, in the death-beds of those who have summed up their good works to those who stood by. Who more humble than St. Bernard? yet when he was dying, he said: "Three things I commend to your imitation, which, in the course I have run, I remember to have observed, according to my ability. I trusted less to my own understanding than to that of another. When injured, I did not seek to punish the wrong-doer. I would give scandal to no one, and if it happened that I did, I removed it as well as I could." Palladius in his Lausiac history gives the following as the dying words of

the Abbot Anuph, "From the time I possessed the name of our Saviour upon earth, no falsehood has ever proceeded out of my mouth. I have partaken of no earthly food, but an angel from heaven has daily sustained me with celestial bread. Saying these and such like things, on the third day he gave up his spirit, which was immediately taken by angels and the choir of martyrs, and carried to heaven, while they (his disciples) looked on, and heard the hymns that were chanted." Similar also were the last words of the Abbot Pambo, "I do not remember ever to have eaten the bread of idleness; *and I do not repent of anything I have ever said, even to this hour.*" This anecdote of the famous solitary of the desert of Nitria acquires great light from the account of his first essay in the eremitical life, as it is given by Father Marrin, the Minim, in his Lives of the Fathers of the Desert (ii. 163). It appears that S. Pambo left the world in his youth, and before he had learned to read. Accordingly, on his arrival in the desert, and before he had put himself under the spiritual direction of the great S. Antony, he asked an aged solitary to teach him some psalms, and enable him to learn them by heart. The good father gave him for his first lesson those words of the 38th psalm, "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." These words went to Pambo's heart. He said they were quite enough for the present. He forgot his ambition to know psalms by heart, and took the words rather for his rule of life, though it seemed at first sight an odd rule for a solitary in the desert. However, the bargain was,

that as soon as he had mastered those words, he was to return to his preceptor, and take another lesson. Six moons passed, and there was no Pambo. The aged solitary knew the wiles of the devil, and was affectionately solicitous about the perseverance of his young disciple. At last one day he found him, and gently rebuked him for not having returned to his cell for another lesson. Pambo replied that he had not learned the first one yet. Later in life one of his friends jokingly asked him if he had learned that first lesson yet. He replied that he had barely done so, though he had been nineteen years about it. This enables us to understand his dying words.

In the sixth lection of the second nocturn on the Octave of St. Dominic, in the Dominican Breviary, the following fact is quoted, which is given at length in F. Malvendas' Annals, "Then having sent for twelve of the elder and more eminent fathers, he (S. Dominic) made a general confession of all his sins to the prior of the convent at Bologna; and when that sacred duty had been performed, he said to those around him, Lo, my most dear brethren, by the singular grace of God I am a pure virgin at this day: if you too will cultivate a purity, you will wonderfully advance in sanctity of life and the sweet odour of noble reputation."

Who is not reminded by all this of that holy boasting, which by an impulse of the Holy Spirit the great Apostle gave vent to in his second epistle to the Corinthians? Who does not remember the words of holy Job, xxix. 14. "I was clad with justice: and I clothed myself with my judgment as

with a robe and a diadem. I was an eye to the blind and a foot to the lame. I was the father of the poor, and the cause that I knew not I searched out most diligently?" Or the words of Ezechias, (Isaias xxxviii) "I beseech Thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight?" or those of Sara, (Tobias iii. 16.) "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I never coveted a husband, and have kept my soul clean from all lust. Never have I joined myself with them that play; neither have I made myself a partaker with them that walk in lightness?" or those of Nehemias, (2 Esdras v. 19.) "Remember me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people?"

Yet the same virtue of humility moved S. John of the Cross, as Father Philip of S. Paul tells us, "not to suffer them to relate in his presence, what he had endured in the reformation of his order, saying that his sins only were to be mentioned, and the merits of Christ's Passion." Nay, in one cause of a servant of God, whose name is not given, this humility formed a difficulty. Benedict XIV. thus relates the incident: "When I was Promoter of the Faith, I objected, in the discussion of the cause of a certain servant of God, that he commended himself to God in his last agony, placing his trust in His mercy only, to the exclusion of those works of mercy which he had done in his life-time. I said it was matter of faith that the just truly and properly merit by works of piety, as it is said in S. Matthew, Your reward is very

great in heaven; and that the Council of Trent anathematized those who maintained that the just ought not, on account of the good works done by them in God, to expect and hope for eternal recompense from God through His mercy and the merits of Jesus Christ, even though they may persevere in well-doing and in keeping the Divine precepts unto the end: and that it condemned also those who maintained that the good works of a justified man were the gift of God in such a sense, as not to be also the merits of the justified; or that the justified man by good works which are done by him through the grace of God, does not truly merit an increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of eternal life, if he dies in a state of grace, and an increase also of glory. But the postulators earnestly contended in reply, that the same holy Council taught that, as no pious man ought to doubt of the mercy of God, so also every one, considering himself and his own weakness, may be in fear and dread of his own grace; and because in many things we all offend, every one ought to have before his eyes severity and judgment, as well as mercy and goodness, and therefore the servant of God, in question, because of the doubtfulness of his own justice, and the danger of vain-glory, rested all his trust in the mercy and goodness of God alone. It is therefore written in Daniel ix. 18. 'It is not for our justifications that we present our prayers before Thy face, but for the multitude of Thy tender mercies,' and in St. Luke xvii. 10. 'When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.' In the collect for Sexagesima Sunday, the

Church thus prays, 'O God, who seest that we confide in no action of our own;' and in the collect of the secret in the second Sunday in Advent, 'Since we have no merits to plead, assist us by Thy protection;' and in the Canon of the Consecration, 'Into whose company, do Thou, we beseech Thee, admit us, not considering our merits, but granting us Thy forgiveness.' The subject is explained at length by Thomas Stapleton, Cardinal Bellarmine, and many others."

There were others to whom the thought of their good works came at the hour of death as a temptation from the evil one. Maffei mentions something of this sort in his life of St. Ignatius; and Thomas à Kempis tells us that Rupert de Silvà, a canon regular, was harassed in his last agony by a devil, who appeared in the likeness of a monk lately deceased, and tried to breed in him thoughts of vainglory, by representing to him the good works he had done.

In most men humility would lead them to wish to see their dying bed surrounded by priests, religious and devout friends, to help them with spiritual comforts in that dire extremity. The same undoubted humility caused St. Romuald to send all away that he might die alone. St. Peter Damian thus relates the story: "On a certain day, his bodily strength began to fail, and the disorder growing upon him, he became greatly fatigued. Towards sunset, he commanded the two brothers who were by him, to go out, shut the door of the cell after them, and return in the morning to say matins with him. They, anxious about his end, went out unwillingly, not indeed to rest themselves:

but, lest their master should die, they remained near the door of the cell in painful anxiety about that talent of precious treasure. They tarried for some time, and listened attentively with curious ears, but when they heard neither the movements of his body nor the sound of his voice, they conjectured truly what had happened, and breaking open the door, rushed violently in, kindled a light, and found the body of the saint lying on the ground, his blessed soul having been carried to heaven. The celestial pearl lay there, as it were, neglected, but to be laid up with honour, in the treasury of the Great King. He died as he had foretold, and passed to the place for which he hoped."

Again, humility would most of all prompt men to seek eagerly for the last sacraments and fortifying rites of the Church when in their agony. This is so strongly felt, that in the Congregation of Rites enquiry is always made upon this head; and Benedict XIV., when promoter of the faith, objected, but groundlessly, to the canonization of S. Vincent of Paul, on the ground that he had not received the Viaticum. He had in fact communicated that morning. Yet this very humility led S. Ignatius, who knew by revelation he was dying, not to ask either for the Viaticum or Extreme Unction. It is one of the most singular passages in the Lives of the Saints, and curiously characteristic of the saint himself. (Life ii. 41, Orat. Edit.) "Pietro Ribadeneira was questioned on this subject by Bartolommeo Perez, assistant in Spain, who enquired why the holy father did not ask for Extreme Unction when he knew that he was at the point of

death; he replied as follows: It is extremely probable that the Saint had knowledge or received a revelation of his death; otherwise, when he was one who so seldom made a positive affirmation, he would not have repeated it with such confidence to Polanco, or so earnestly sought the Papal Benediction. But his *prudence and humility* prevented his asking for the Viaticum, or for Extreme Unction; for since the doctors considered that his illness was not dangerous and made light of it, he could not ask for the sacraments without saying that they were in error, and that he was better informed about his illness and his death than they were, or else that God had revealed it to him, and the Saint judged that this was inconsistent with the virtues of *prudence and humility*. Having therefore received the sacraments of confession and communion in the ordinary manner, and gently ordered Polanco to ask the Papal benediction, so as to satisfy his devotion as far as he was able, he yielded all the rest to the opinion of the physicians who stood there."

See now how various can be the operation of one virtue exercised only in one act, humility in dying; and let us learn therefore the wisdom of a large heart and wide charity and broad interpretation of other men's actions, while we adore Him of whose profitable manifestations in all their countless diversities, it has been said, "But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as He will."

Though it is not necessary for the illustration of our subject now, we may be forgiven for transcribing the account of the death of St. Peter of

Alcantara, which gathers up into itself all the most perfect exercises of humility which could be desired in that last passage. Its own beauty will apologise for its length.

These are the words of the Report of the Auditors of the Rota : "It came to pass, that, in addition to the infirmities under which the servant of God laboured during his life, a fever supervened, of which he believed he should die. While it continued upon him, though he was extremely enfeebled by it, he never omitted to recite the Divine Office. When he saw the affliction of the monks, he began to comfort them, saying, 'Weep not, my children, for the time is come in which the merciful God will have mercy on me.' That evening he begged that he might receive the sacrament of the Eucharist, and when it was put off till the morning of the next day, he spent the whole night in most sweet prayer and contemplation; and with abundant tears of sorrow and contrition for his sins, frequently repeated the words of the Psalmist : 'Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.' As one guilty of the greatest sins, and as if he were one who for so many years together had not performed the most severe and rigid penance, he implored God to wash him more and more, and to cleanse him from his sins. These words, proceeding from that divine affection, ministered the greatest edification to the brethren present : and it was to them an occasion of shame to see their father, who had spent his whole life in the service of God, in prayer, divine contemplation and penance, thus at its close wash away his sins with tears,

and pray God to cleanse him from them more and more. He also added, Chasten me, O Lord, not according to my sins, but according to Thy great mercy. I hope, indeed, to be saved by Thee through the merits of Thy most holy passion. The day dawned, and when he knew that the most holy Viaticum was coming, although weakened, and like a paralytic unable to move, he threw himself at once, without any assistance, on his knees, and with clasped hands and incredible fervour of spirit worshipped the Divine Sacrament, and received it with the greatest veneration, with tears and holy awe, and begged that at the proper time he might receive the most holy sacrament of Extreme Unction. Then fixing his eyes on the crucifix which he had before him, with a serene countenance, and his spirit as it were on fire, he remained for some time in profound repose, in an extasy, and absorbed in God. When the physician came, the man of God asked him: When will the longed-for time come, and the hour when I shall be delivered from this destruction, and shall enter on the way of life? The physician replied, Father, that hour will soon come, it is now drawing nigh. When the holy man heard this, he was affected with unutterable joy, and turning exultingly to God, he repeated with a joyous look the words of the royal prophet, 'I rejoiced at the things that were said to me; we shall go into the house of the Lord.' Early on the following day the sacrament of Extreme Unction was administered to him; he received it with the greatest devotion and reverence, and with

the most perfect arrangement of his person; and as if suffering from no illness, he recited the psalms alternately with the priest and others. In imitation of his seraphic father S. Francis, he would make proof of his spirit of poverty even in death, so that he might die in that poverty wherein he had been born. Wishing to retain in death not even the habit he had on, he begged the Father Guardian out of charity to bury him in some old habit, having taken off his own. He then caused his children and his brethren to be summoned, and commended to them observance of their rule, with due obedience to superiors; and seeing that the hour of his departure out of this world to everlasting joy was come, he embraced them with his arms full of charity, and gave them his blessing. When this was done, the servant of God became quiet, and in that interior quietness he moved neither hand nor foot for some time. When he came to himself he said to the monks, My children, do you not see the most Holy Trinity, our Lady the most glorious Virgin Mary, and S. John the Evangelist? His face beamed with heavenly joy, and with this divine vision, on bended knees, preaching to, and exhorting his brethren—as the Blessed Mother Theresa says—and repeating certain verses of the psalms, he rendered his soul to God. His bodily eyes remained clear and bright, to the admiration of all, and so continued till his body was committed to the grave."—pp. 161-3.

To sum up all, let us quote what Father da Ponte says of the variety of God's ways, in his preface to the life of Marina d'Escobar: "Our great God and Lord, who in every age, and time, and

state, is admirable in His saints, would in these our days elect to Himself a venerable virgin, named Donna Marina d'Escobar; in whom He disclosed the immense treasures of His infinite wisdom, charity, and mercy, and the inestimable riches of His grace; conversing interiorly with her, and manifesting to her all the mysteries which the Catholic faith teaches and the holy Church celebrates, in a manner so new, so grand, and so extraordinary, that the favours bestowed on her, are not inferior to those which we read of in the lives of Saints Gertrude, Matilda, Bridget, Catherine of Siena, Teresa, and others like them. Since the powerful hand of God is not shortened, nor His wisdom exhausted, nor His charity destroyed, He knows how, and is willing and able to renew the things done by Him in times past, and even greater things in these our times, so great are the grandeurs which our Lord can disclose of Himself and of His divine perfections, and of the things done for men. And so various are the modes whereby He can disclose them, that after having communicated them to whomsoever He pleases, He always still retains an infinite number to bestow in so many new ways as it would be impossible for us to imagine."

What has been observed under this head of the variety of God's ways, may perhaps serve as a reply to another class of objections. It is said that the Lives of the Saints are monotonous, that one is just like another, and that when you have read one, you have read them all. Looking at the Lives in a literary point of view, we are fain to acknowledge that there is some justice in these objections, al-

though they are stated in an exaggerated way. If we except the historical Saints, and perhaps the founders of orders, there is to the superficial reader a very tiresome sameness. Here are a number of men who left the world in various ways, fasted, watched, wore hair shirts, disciplined themselves, and had a variety of other austerities; they prayed immensely; they imitated our Lord and the Old Testament Saints more or less literally; they ran counter to every worldly maxim they could think of; and after their own fashion they were always trying to do good to others, always getting into scrapes, and always managing to make even good kind of people their enemies. Here is the phenomenon. Very striking. We have nothing to say against it. The Church is for it; so it is all right. Only it is always the same. It is simply a phenomenon. Whether they were bishops, priests, monks, nuns, or lay-people matters little. The accident of position, vocation, or sex, hardly constitutes sufficient difference to vary the interest. As one monkey is like another monkey, so one saint is like another saint. The show is interesting for the first time; but as the novelty wears off, the interest dies away.

No one can deny that there is a great deal of truth in this. It illustrates what we have been saying all along. Depend upon it, in the long run, these Lives must be dull to those who read them for any other object than that of uniting themselves more closely to God. Is it not even the experience of those who are trying to lead spiritual lives, that when they are lukewarm, or are for any cause less

in the presence of God, the Saints' Lives are dull, and seem to give out neither light nor heat? Much more then will this be the case with those who read them merely for the sake of being interested by them.

To those who are endeavouring to draw a spiritual science out of them, the case is widely different. The very similitude of one Saint to another is full of meaning and of teaching. It helps to the discernment of principles. In many cases it animates us with the desire to imitate these heroes of the Gospel. Then again the similitudes bring out the discrepancies all the more strikingly; just as the collector of shells finds special interest in a large assortment of some one class of shells, which he classifies in its subdivisions, and often feels himself creating knowledge as he goes on arranging. The fine shades of grace, the varying conditions under which certain gifts are held and exercised, the shifting hues of the supernatural, the difference of type, and the faintness or boldness of the impressions of the same type,—all these things are as distinct to the eye of the hagiologist, as is the outline of each separate Alp to him who dwells all the year round upon the plains beneath, though it is to the eye of the passing tourist but one gracefully jagged sky-line, with here and there a Monte Rosa or other famous height distinguished from its peers.

We know absolutely nothing of geology; but we have seen a collection of stones. Certainly there were differences; differences in colour, weight, and look; but on the whole it was mightily uninteresting. They were all stones; brown was the predominating hue; many were not to be found in or about the

neighbourhood, yet we should never have noticed these rare specimens if we had kicked them or tumbled over them, as we walked along the road. It was a dull sight; but the secret of the dulness was our own ignorance and want of sympathy. To the geologist each stone made its confession; it told of strange chronologies, of elemental strifes, of volcanic action, of uncomfortable times before the surface of the earth was cooled; it made restitution of queer animals that it had kept these thousand of years, and which were no longer denizens of earth; it spoke of changes of climate and of arctic palms; nay, it even mentioned to its confessor in the lowest of all possible whispers that it was an inveterate impostor, for that after all it was not a genuine honest stone, as it looked, but a collection of compressed and liquefied animals, and it went so far as to reveal how life might be brought out of it again. We will make no boast of our ignorance. It would be a famous recreation to have stones talking to us in this way; and wise men make more than recreation of it. The lawgiver of the Hebrews, and the truth of his history, have been tried at the bar of these stones. Some stones have been naughty in the matter. Nay, other stones, bold and wicked stones they were, have said there was no God, that they made themselves, and matter was eternal. O brown stones! what a science there is in you! You give us new thoughts of God, new notions of His magnificence, new joy and complacency that He is our own Father, and that we shall one day see Him as He is. And when you seem to blaspheme, it is only

bunglers who bring discord out of you, because they know no better.

So is it with the Lives of the Saints. They are full of secrets to those who make a science of them; they are dull to those who look upon them as we do upon the museum of geological specimens. It is no crime not to know geology; it is no crime not to know hagiology. Still there is such a science, and it may be known, by pains, by study, and like other sciences, by natural aptitude, knack, and instinct. But it is dry as a mere speculation; and uncomfortable, where there is no thought of imitation. However to the scientific eye the Saints, like the stones, are very different, often most different when they look most like. They too tell us wonderful things, of the formation of the Church, of volcanic action within her, of marvellous crises, of things which are no longer in the Church, of inhabited deserts, pontifical catacombs, and such like, and also of uncomfortable, though in certain respects enviable times, the old martyr times, when the surface of the Church was by no means cooled. They tell us too about God, His character, His angels, His beatific manifestation of Himself, revelations quite as interesting, and more irreproachable, than the boasts of those would-be-eternal stones.

The geologist is for stones; we are for Saints. To take the lowest view, for our purpose there is no need of a higher,—let every one enjoy his own taste, and abound in his own sense, and admire everybody else's taste, and think there is something in everybody else's sense, provided always no word to the contrary has come from Rome.

2. Another source of interest in the admirable part of the Saints' lives is in the heavenly words revealed in them. If we are not prepared to assert that all these things are unworthy of credence, and that hagiology is nothing but a voluminous imposture, then surely to have words by the saints, the angels, our Blessed Lady, and even our dearest Lord Himself, must be a source of the most intense interest. For instance, He is said to have revealed to Sister Margaret of Beaune, that during His Sacred infancy He went through awful sufferings, especially every Friday, in consequence of the foresight and vision of His Passion. Now, if this be authentic, can it be that to a heart deeply loving Jesus it is not a matter of intense interest and of tearful meditation? When Father Monroy falls asleep on the predella of the altar in the middle of the night, our Lord comes to him and tells him that special devotion to the Eternal Father is pleasing in His, our Blessed Saviour's, sight, and from that hour Father Monroy never could pronounce the words, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus, in the preface of the Mass, without being inundated with heavenly consolations; and Father Nieremberg tells us he went about the house perpetually crying out, Diligamus ardenter Patrem æternum.

Thus, also, to quote a cognate instance, Father Surin, in the account of the graces given him by God and which his superiors constrained him to write by obedience, says that in the impressions made upon him by the interior visits of the Most Holy Trinity, especially by what he calls the *voices* of the Three Divine Persons, the voice of the Father was an un-

speakable gentleness, while that of the Son was an inexplicably beautiful and powerful light, and that of the Holy Spirit a tenderness which he could not describe. Again, he says that the Father appeared as an inexhaustible source of good, the Son as the most choice beauty, and the Holy Spirit as substantial goodness. And still further he illustrates as follows this love of the Eternal Father. "The soul is sometimes so filled with this good, that it cannot explain the sweetness and satisfaction it feels in it. Then God gives it permission to pronounce words of fondling and tenderness, which pass anything human. S. Bernard had good reason for saying that the soul at last gets into such a state, that it thinks of nothing else but *flattering* God in a manner which sounds like folly. He who has read the Italian canticles of S. Francis, will see what it is to speak to God of love. In that state the soul as it were loses itself, or its self-possession, at the sight of that Object of its heart, and not knowing what it does or what it says, it gives itself liberty in what to man's understanding are extravagances, which betray a spirit out of itself, and not knowing what to do or what to become. For more than fifteen years, and even at present, I can call God nothing but *Papa;* and I have often thought of what S. Paul says, that we have in us the Spirit of Jesus Christ who cries Abba, Father! It is a supernatural voice to the soul, but also excessively *delicious*, coming from the bottom of the heart, and which addresses God, sometimes as its dear love, sometimes as its dear father, sometimes as its tender spouse; and it is sometimes so fixed in

the soul, that nothing can hinder this holy liberty. For it is before God as His child, who, although full of fear because of past terrors, is taken by Him, and constrained to receive those caresses which He gives who is the Father from whom all paternity is named in heaven and upon earth. It is true that at the beginning my soul did not dare to call God by these delicious names, which the Spouse alone may pronounce in her wise and sober folly, but the impetuosity of its love drove it on, to satisfy itself with words of tenderness, which reduce the heart to such an extremity as I cannot adequately express." (p. 330.)

As we are upon the subject of devotion to the Person of the Eternal Father, it may not be amiss to mention the opinions of theologians. The schoolmen teach that we cannot be under a special obligation to any one of the Three Divine Persons, considered apart from the others, because of the received axiom of the schools that whatsoever God operates externally, that the whole Trinity operates. But they add that this does not by any means hinder a special devotion to one of the Divine Persons, for, as they say, Cultus specialis non presupponit obligationem specialem. Theophilus Raynaud, in his Heteroclita Spiritualia, has a very interesting tract on this devotion; and while he asserts its perfect orthodoxy he gives reasons why there should not be mass or office of the first Person of the Holy Trinity.

During the Pontificate of Innocent XII. some persons, in France, (if we are not mistaken,) asked for the mass and office of the Eternal Father on

the 5th Sunday after Easter, on the ground of the Gospel for that day, which so often refers to God the Father, and also because of its suitableness as preceding the Ascension, Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday. There were great names on the side of the petition, among them Guyet and Da Ponte; and the doctrine of Suarez was with the supplicants, as he says there is no difficulty in honouring one of the Divine Persons separately, whether by the celebration of a feast, or the erection of an altar, or the dedication of a church. Indeed, S. Cyril of Jerusalem, in his catechetical instructions, says that the cathedral at Jerusalem was anciently dedicated to God the Father. When the petition came before the Congregation of Rites, Prospero Bottinio, the Promoter of the Faith, argued against it. His objections, quoted by Benedict XIV., are simply taken from Raynaud's tract, as may be seen by comparing the two; and indeed Bottinio quotes him expressly. It was urged that many things might be lawful and pious, which yet it was not well to celebrate by feast, mass, and office. Secondly, that if a feast of Eternal Father was granted, the Church must go on to grant one of the Eternal Son, not as incarnate, but as proceeding by eternal generation from the Father; and also one of the Eternal Spirit, not as descending on the Church, but as eternally breathed forth from Father and Son. Thirdly, that it might puzzle the common people, and lead to great inconveniences. To this Raynaud adds that the most Holy Trinity is not *propter nos*, but for His own glory, whereas what we celebrate are mysteries and benefits in our behalf;

though it would seem that that argument should have told equally against the institution of the Feast of the most Holy Trinity, extended to the universal Church by John XXII., and the office of which was composed by Alcuin, at the request of S. Boniface of Mayence. Raynaud further adds, that there might as well be a feast of the S. Humanity, apart from the Divine Person, because Suarez, with the consent of nearly all the scholastics, says that even so considered, it is worthy of a special veneration. So also there should be a Feast of the Soul of Christ, (Corpus Christi he shows is not of the Body alone,) and of the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

It is observable that neither Prospero Bottinio nor the Blessed Joseph Tommasi, in the Congregation of Rites, quote Raynaud's argument against this feast, on the ground that it is not congruous to multiply feasts in this vale of unhappiness, and so to emulate the continous holyday of the blessed in Heaven. And it is perhaps the more observable, first, because Bottinio's argument is so clearly a recapitulation of Raynaud's tract; and secondly, because of the well known letter of S. Bernard, rebuking the canons of Lyons for introducing the Feast of our Lady's Conception. "What yet remains to be added, think we, to these honours? They reply, That the Conception also should be honoured, which preceded the honoured birth, for if it had not gone first, the other would not have come after. But what if another, for the same reason, were to assert that festal honours should be paid to both her parents? (This the Church has actually done since, in the Feasts of

S. Joachim and S. Anna.) Then some one else might ask the same for her grandfather and grandmother, and their ancestors likewise; and so it would go on to infinity, and there would be no end of feasts. This frequency of joys is for our heavenly country, not for our exile; this multitude of holydays befits citizens, it befits not exiles." (Epist. 176, sect. 6.)

Now, putting aside the direct revelations of S. Bridget, S. Gertrude, S. Matilda, S. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, and others, there are few lives of the Saints in which something is not said or done by the inhabitants of heaven; and really it is hard to understand how these things can be uninteresting, at least where they are believed: for if unpractical for men, why were they spoken? Not surely for the Saints' sake only, else they would not have been manifested to the Church.

3. Again, we find in these lives repeated disclosures of the special efficacy and acceptableness of peculiar devotions in the sight of God. Thus in one life we learn that there is a great power in the words of the Salve Regina. Our Lord vouchsafes to reveal to the Blessed Veronica of Binasco, that tears shed over His Mother's dolours are dearer to Him than those shed over His own Passion. He reveals to the Blessed Michele of Fiesole the Corona del Signore, which the Church has so liberally indulgenced. To another of His servants He imparts the acceptableness with God, of keeping devoutly the Feasts of the Apostles, for that there is great jubilee in heaven on those days, especially on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, as He told Elizabeth de

la Croix. Now these things are not rules. They may be meant mainly for the person to whom they are addressed. Time and place may qualify them. But if they are not false, are they not interesting?

Again, we read of men desiring to die before certain days, that they may spend the feasts in Heaven, and of the multitude of souls whom our Lady delivers from Purgatory on the Feast of the Assumption. Some saints have even mysterious sympathies with the joys or sorrows of the calendar of the Church. Strange examples of the often unconscious sympathy of holy persons with the calendar may be found in the life prefixed to the visions of Sister Emmerich. These, however, we will pass over, as having as yet but little authority. The following extract from the Life of the Blessed Mary of Oignies in the Bollandists will illustrate our meaning, (p. 421.) "When any great solemnity approached, she would not unfrequently feel great joy for eight days before; and thus, throughout the year, she was variously affected with different feelings, according to what the Church was at that time celebrating. When the festival of any particular saint was at hand, that saint was wont to acquaint her with it, and on the day itself he would pay her a visit, with a great multitude of heavenly spirits, and she would pass the whole day with him in spirit, with great joy and 'gladness. And thus, from familiar and frequent intercourse with the saints, she learned to distinguish one saint and angel from another, just as a man does his friends and neighbours. And sometimes a saint, who was entirely unknown in that part of

the country, would acquaint her with his festival, which was being celebrated in some distant part, in order that she might rejoice at it. Even when she was told nothing about it, her heart made her feel which were feast days and which were not, for those which were distinguished by any solemnity were more sweet and delightful to her than common days. All the festivals were written in her heart, as in a martyrology. Accordingly, it happened once that she was in a village called Lenlos, in a church dedicated to S. Gertrude, and on the next day there should have been a Feast in honour of S. Gertrude celebrated there, but the priest of that place had not observed it. The saint, however, perceiving within herself that the feast was approaching, could not contain herself any longer; and since the priest did not make his appearance, nor any one to ring the bells for the Vespers on the preceding day, as is usual on such occasions, she rose from her place, and rang the bells herself as well as she could. The priest, hearing this, ran to the church, and asked why the bells were rung; 'For it is not usual,' he said, 'to ring them at this hour, unless on the eve of a feast.' Mary was covered with great confusion and fear, and answered timidly, 'Pardon me, father, but it is a great festival to night, *for I feel the Church overflowing with joy*, though I do not know whose feast it is.' The priest upon this looked over the calendar, and found that the Feast of S. Gertrude ought to be celebrated next day."

And what is said of Blessed Mary, that "she learned to distinguish one saint and angel from

another," is paralleled by what is recorded of that illiterate and poor girl, B. Catherine of Raconigi, and her familiar intercourse with the citizens of heaven. "She drew," says Father Razzi, "beautiful pictures with her wise words, of the appearances of the Mother of Jesus Christ, and said in what she did not resemble her dear Son. She said that the Blessed S. Mary Magdalene was very beautiful, while, on the contrary, S. Martin was naturally ugly, although his soul was beautiful because of the grace which resided there. She said that the martyr S. Agatha, was beautiful, having a full and very beautiful face, of a rather dark colour. She maintained that S. Agnes was beautiful, but very little; her face was plump, and her complexion reddish, and she had curling hair; S. Margaret was of the middle stature; her eyes were large and black. S. Catherine's beauty was perfect, and no fault could be found in it. S. Cecilia was tall and very slender. She described S. Augustine as being considerably tall, and of a dark complexion, and very circumspect in his actions; S. Francis was dark, little, and blear-eyed; S. Antony was small in stature, with a beautiful expression of the eye; S. Bernard was joyous, and rather little. She used to give similar descriptions of many other saints, but we have omitted them for fear of wearying the reader." (Life, p. 399.)

With reference to the passage just quoted, so much as this may be said. The highest kind of visions is called intellectual. In these the mind apprehends divine things without figures and images; and it may do this under two conditions;

either by a special light interpreting the sensible signs of a bodily or an ideal vision, or by a perception of mysteries through a species infused into the intellect by God Himself for that purpose. An ideal vision, the visio spiritualis of S. Austin, enables the soul to see by means of species already existing in the imagination; though this, we will venture to say, is certainly not the case exclusively. The visions above referred to of B. Catherine are of the lowest kind, being bodily visions; and in these there is nothing to hinder an admixture of nature. She might have seen pictures of these saints, and while they did really appear to her in vision, they might have seemed outwardly what her imagination had previously depicted them. This is not said in any spirit of scepticism, but to meet, it may be, historical objections. Thus she says S. Bernard was rather little, whereas the words of Gaufridus about S. Bernard in his Life (cap. I.) are, "A stature of fair mediocrity, but nearer to tallness." Cardinal Bona tells us that in his day it was an undecided quarrel between mystics and scholastics, whether there could be in this life an intellectual vision without the intervention of images in the mind If there were granted an *intellectual* vision of a saint in his yet unrisen body, it is hardly to be thought. a species unlike the reality would be infused.

4. The external signs of favour, and the miraculous powers, which are conferred upon the Saints, are surely interesting, for a variety of reasons, which it would take too long to enter into now. The visible rings of the two Catherines, Agnes, Rose, and Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, the manna which used to fall on

S. Agnes of Montepulciano at prayer, the snow, which hung suspended over the head of S. Peter of Alcantara at prayer, the oil which distils from the relics of the merciful and alms-giving Saints;—surely God did these things to interest us, to teach us, to make an impression upon us. In the matter of miracles, there are, besides the prodigies themselves, many things interesting, as illustrations of Scripture or otherwise. Our Lord promised that His disciples should do certain miracles, and one was to drink poison and not be hurt by it. A person some time ago, investigating the subject of the fulfilment of this prophecy, mentioned the difficulty of verifying it. He said there were many stories of glasses breaking, or of Saints being interiorly warned that what was offered them was poison, but that he had not found a case which was the literal fulfilment of the promise. Now there was reported to be such an one in the life of Suor Domenica del Paradiso, of the third order of S. Dominic, who died in Florence somewhere about the year 1600: yet on investigation the two instances, for there were two, turned out to be miraculous cures after intense suffering from poison; and so not to the point.

It is almost curious how difficult it is to find an instance which does meet the very words of the prophecy, though the substance of the promise has been so often fulfilled. Father Balthazar of Loyola, the Jesuit, who was the son of the king of Fez, and abjured Mahometanism at Malta, converted two thousand Moors. This so exasperated some of the people, that they determined to get rid of him. Accordingly a man presented him with a bunch of

poisoned flowers to smell at. God revealed it to Father Balthazar, who said with a smile to his enemy, "Will you abjure the Prophet's law if I smell at these flowers and escape unharmed?" and it ended in the baptism of the Moor. So again S. Louis Bertrand, the Dominican missionary, was poisoned by a Carribee priest, and he suffered excruciating agonies, and lay at death's door for five days, when he was miraculously cured. In both these cases there was the substance of the promise, but not the letter. So it was with the two cases recorded in the life of Suor Domenica del Paradiso; the promise is hardly fulfilled to the letter; in one instance some grapes were poisoned and given her by her enemies, but great pain and violent vomitings followed, though she was cured without serious harm; and again, when an ignorant druggist sent her some poison, our Lady and S. Dominic appeared and partially cured her, and after that our Blessed Lord in an apparition vouchsafed to complete the cure Himself. This is hardly a literal fulfilment of the words in S. Mark, "If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." There is no instance we can find in Pietra Sancta which meets the words; Maldonatus passes it by without notice, and Cornelius à Lapide says no more on it than this, "They shall drink poison and be none the worse for it, as did the Apostles, and very many of the Saints."

There are two anecdotes in Piety Exemplified which illustrate this promise of our Lord. Father Delré tells us that one day the Indians put poison into his food, but that he experienced no inconvenience from it. F. Gollet, missioner at Nimfo,

mentions the following occurrence, which happened to himself:

"An idolater, whom I had engaged in my service as valet, with the hopes of converting him, undertook to poison me. Nothing was more easy; he was my constant cook. He hoped his crime would not transpire, and that he would have time to plunder my effects. He therefore mixed verdigris and sublimate with what he had prepared for my dinner. I had no sooner dined than I experienced a violent head-ache, and an hour later very acute pains in both my eyes, but in one the pain was not unlike the points of needles pricking it. As the sky was very much overcast, and menaced an approaching storm, I attributed my sufferings to the changed state of the atmosphere. I supped at night in the same manner I dined, on poisoned eggs. My cook wished to witness the effect. He remained alone with me during my meal. I spoke to him on the necessity of embracing the Christian religion. He seemed to relish my reasoning, but brought many excuses for wishing to defer his baptism, assuring me, that he would be prepared to receive it in fifteen days; convinced, undoubtedly, that I should not be alive to remind him of his engagement. I passed a very restless night, and in the morning was seized with excruciating pains in my stomach, which continued all that day and the night following, till two in the morning, when unable to get any the least rest, I arose. I then was seized with violent fits of retching, which caused me to suffer much, and what I disgorged tasted exactly like poison. I took

some theriaca, a kind of treacle, and was presently relieved. I immediately fell upon my knees, to thank God for my preservation. The remainder of the night I spent with the greatest composure. In the morning, I perceived that I had vomited verdigris, mixed with a white drug which was to me unknown, but which I have since been assured was sublimate. There were other indubitable symptoms that what I had taken was poison. Blessed be the God of all mercies, for showing even in so contemptible a servant that He watches over the lives of such as labour in His service, and that He changes even the nature of things most capable of hurting them according to the promise of Jesus Christ, *Et si mortiferum quid biberint non eis nocebit.*"

These stories are, however, not altogether conclusive, neither do we quite know how much authority is to be assigned to them. As to F. Delré's case, missioners fancy things, neither do we know the quantity or sort of poison he supposed had been mixed with his food. As to F. Gollet's case, the poison did hurt him, so it was merely an instance of a miraculous cure, not of the prevention of the natural consequences of poison. Besides he may have been under-dosed, as the cook seems to have expected some days to elapse before his death; for, to be safe, he promises to receive baptism in fifteen days.

But the most remarkable disapointment in hunting for an instance of the fulfilment of this promise, which no doubt exists somewhere, is the following one. In the sixth volume of Martene's Veterum

Scriptorum Monumenta there is a certain dialogue of Paul the Florentine, which Mabillon found in the Laurentian Library. It purports to give an account of the rise of the Servite Order, and the interlocutors are Pietro de' Medici, the son of Cosmo, and Mariano, bishop of Cortona, who had been superior of the Servite convent of the Santissima Annunziata at Florence. In it Paul makes mention of one John, whom he calls fundamentum aliud ordinis, and relates with minute circumstantiality, how that there was a certain avaricious citizen of Florence, named Antony. Antony goes out one day for the sake of taking a walk (deambulationis gratia) and determines to go and see this John, to find out if he is the holy man people take him to be. John, discerning his spirit, rebukes him very sharply for his covetousness and his harshness to the poor. Antony, partly enraged and partly fearing the democratic tendencies of John's levelling doctrines, resolves to poison him, and sends him by a maid-servant an alms of poisoned wine. Meanwhile this is revealed to John, and when the maid arrives, he says to her, "Now taste that cup which you have prepared for me." She, unaware of her master's diabolical intent, is about to taste the wine, when John stops her, and drinking the wine, he says, "Now go and tell your master I have swallowed all this poisoned cup." At the same moment that John at the convent swallows the wine, and is no worse for it, Antony in his own house falls down dead; and Paul adds very naturally, "The Gospel says, If they shall drink

any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them. (Martene. Vet. Script. Mon. vii. col. 576, 577.)

The first difficulty is that in the common catalogues, none of the seven Founders is called John. Their names are usually given as follows : 1, Buonfigliuolo Monaldi, 2, Buonagiunta Manetti, 3, Manetto dell' Antella, 4, Amadio Amidei, 5, Uguccione Uguccioni, 6, Sostegno Sostegni, 7, Alessio Falconieri ; and so they are named in the Processes in the Congregation of Rites. But if we turn to François Malaval's French life of S. Philip Benizi, the fifth general of the Servites, published at Marseilles in 1672, we find (p. 34) the Blessed Buonagiunta Manetti called John, with considerable varieties also in the names of the other founders ; then (p. 52) comes this story, with variations from the narrative of Paul the Florentine in Martene. There it is Manetti who goes to Antony the usurer to rebuke him for cruelty to the poor during a famine, not Antony who takes a walk to see him, and it is while Manetti is making his usual quête through the city. Antony pretends to be converted, and adds that he will send some alms to the convent. The maid-servant (it is still a maid) rings at the convent door, bringing poisoned bread as well as poisoned wine. Manetti says he will not taste it unless the maid eats some of it first. She is about to do so when he stops her, tells her it is poisoned, prophesies that when she gets home, she will find that God has already judged her master ; and then, making the sign of the cross, after the example of S. Benedict, he both eats and drinks and is no worse, and the maid, on reaching home, finds her master's

corpse on the bier. So far we have the substantial fact ; poison is swallowed, and it does no harm to him who swallows ; but the varieties of the story breed suspicion.

Now we pass to Father Pecoroni's Italian history of the Rise of the Servites and the lives of the seven Founders, published in Rome in 1740, and dedicated to Benedict XIV., then reigning. It is compiled from the contemporaneous documents inserted in the passages and judicial relations, which were admitted in evidence by the Congregation of Rites. In page 80 we have this same story. Antony is a merchant, over head and ears in the abomination of usury. Manetti sets his heart on converting him. He makes long prayers for him, and sees him, not once only, but so often, that he becomes quite a nuisance to Antony, who at last, to get rid of the pertinacious saint, feigns conversion, and the more effectually to hinder his future visits, resolves to poison him. Here we have the bread as well as the wine, and the maid-servant ; but no asking her to eat and drink, for God had revealed it all to his servant at prayer, and the corpse of Antony is found not on the bier, but on the ground, where he had tumbled. But there is one more unlucky variation; instead of eating and drinking and being no worse, Manetti makes the sign of the cross, and lo ! the vessel in which the wine is contained, forthwith breaks to shivers, and the bread in one instant turns black, and becomes a living mass of disgusting worms. And so our instance breaks to pieces also, and we dare not say

the poison was swallowed, and the promise fulfilled to the letter.

The beautiful exposition given to the promise by spiritual writers, is having its fulfilment daily. Confessors drink poison while they drink in the sins of their penitents in the confessional, and it harms them not. Memory loses the power to hold the facts, as it holds other facts; the images fade from off the imagination as fast as they are written upon it; the understanding becomes blessedly inert, and does no more than the judgment of penance there and then requires, while the will seems to change its nature, and when the flames are held to it, it will not burn. This is one of the many ways in which it is given us to feel and handle grace palpably, so that we walk herein by sight rather than by faith. It is one of the daily miracles which are being worked always in the secret places of the Church of God.

To return, there is often teaching also, even in the long and prolix account of the Saints' miracles, as, for instance, they work miracles in a way suitable to their humour and spirit when alive, reminding us of the words of our risen Lord, "See! it is I Myself."

5. How much do we learn also in these lives about the joys of heaven, the horrors of hell, and above all, of the Suffering Church in purgatory? And surely if our future beyond the grave is as engrossing an object with us as it ought to be, such intimations must be deeply interesting to us, not for our own sakes only, but for the knowledge which kindles fresh and more affectionate charity towards our dear dead.

The lives of the Saints lead us far amid the wonders of the bright and beautiful kingdoms of the angels, and the secrets of their affectionate ministries towards ourselves. Who has not been struck with the devotion of the early martyrs to the angels, which forms so striking a feature in their acts? Think of S. Agnes, S. Prisca, S. Eudocia, and S. Cecilia. Then again we have the familiarity of so many of the modern saints with the heavenly spirits, S. Francesca Romana, S. Rose, and S. Joseph of Cupertino. Those who have a special devotion to S. Raphael have naturally a deep interest in his frequent intercourse with S. John of God, and the Blessed Benvenuta of Bojan. But not to encumber our pages with illustrations, we will content ourselves first with the following extract from the journal of Father Balthasar Alvarez, S. Theresa's confessor.

"December 22, 1671.—While I was at my morning prayer, God, by a singular favour, gave me a great inclination for the holy angels, specially for him who was charged to announce to Mary the incarnation of the Word, for him who consoled Jesus in His agony, and for him who offers to the Eternal Father the victim of the holy sacrifice. I felt also a particular affection for those of the blessed spirits who assisted our Saviour in His prayers, His pains, and His journeys, as they assist the just as well, and also for the angels who aid me to fulfil my obligations, for my faithful guardian, and those of the religious entrusted to my care. From this day this devotion is no longer a permitted practice with me, but a duty I am bound by obedience to fulfil, our Lord having

laid it on me as a special command." And lastly we may adduce the words of Father Surin about his special devotion to the Choir of Thrones. He is writing to the Mère des Anges, at Loudun. "The idea of the angels is extremely sweet to me, and I cannot tell you how my spirit is occupied and filled with the thought of their heavenly choirs, and especially those who are called Thrones, by whom many of your enemies, that is, the devils who torment you, have been put to flight. It often seems to me when I am saying mass, as if I were sacrificing to God seated on those spirits." It need hardly be added how many grave suggestions and interesting lessons are taught us in the lives of the Saints, of the power and malice of the fallen spirits. It is not easy to think of a more personally or practically interesting subject.

6. When we read of the beautiful and marvellous graces which some of the Saints enjoyed, does it not strike us that Jesus, the source of all graces, must have had the same? And does not this often give us new and very reverent views of our dearest Lord? On this head much must be said, if anything is said at all. But are not such illustrations of the Sacred Humanity more, far, far more than interesting?

Among the various illustrations of the divine mystery of the Incarnation, which are furnished by the Lives of the Saints must be reckoned their mysterious vicarious sufferings, and still more their mysterious participation in the sufferings of our Lord Himself, from the Holy Innocents downwards, as if fulfilling those hard words of S. Paul about filling up the lack of the sufferings of Christ, and

showing what a mystery suffering is. In Father Amelot's Life of Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament this is wonderfully brought out. She suffered for sinners for some fourteen or fifteen months, first the tortures of one martyr, then of another. Her bones were actually heard to crack as if she were being broken on the wheel. So Sister Marie Angelique, whose Life Boudon has written, not only suffered the pain of stoning on S. Stephen's day, but the bruises were visible to others. On S. Sebastian's day some invisible power fastened her hands behind her back, and her body was pierced with arrow wounds. On S. Laurence's day her flesh gradually assumed the appearance of being burnt and roasted, while she suffered most excruciating tortures. In the Life of S. Catherine of Ricci, we read as follows (page 90): "One of the souls in Purgatory, for which she suffered a great deal, was that of a prince and ruler, for whom she had offered during his life-time many prayers, fasts, and penances, lest he should be condemned to hell; they had evidently been accepted, for before his death he gave great signs of a change of life, and a firm resolution to spend the remainder of it in the holy fear of God, and he passed in this excellent frame of mind from this world to Purgatory; and as soon as this fact was revealed to Catherine in answer to the prayers she made to that effect, she offered to suffer in her own person all the punishments that the Divine justice was about to inflict on him. Her petition was granted, and the prince's soul raised to enjoy God's glory, but at the same time Catherine's torments began; they

lasted forty days, and were so extraordinary, that the doctors, perceiving them to be beyond the range of their art, concluded that they were sent by God to enable her to atone for some soul in Purgatory. The account given by those who witnessed them, was that her body appeared as if it were covered by a number of blisters full of serum, which boiled as though it was over a fire. They also emitted such excessive heat, that the cell seemed on fire, and no one could remain in it many moments without going out to take breath. It was easy to see that her flesh was burning; her tongue was like a red hot iron, and after the effervescence subsided, it had the appearance of having been roasted; but after a short interval the blisters rose again, bringing the same heat with them; yet they could not impair the joyousness of her face, or the serenity of her mind, which rejoiced in the midst of these fiery torments."

While speaking of the Incarnation, we should not omit to suggest the illustrations of the doctrine and secrets of the Blessed Sacrament, which the lives of the Saints afford. How are all things found in that most dear mystery? It has been well said that of old, "Adam learned the science of God by infusion in the earthly paradise, Solomon in his sleep by means of an ecstasy, S. Paul by a rapture in the third heaven, S. Peter by a revelation in the bosom of the eternal Father, Magdalen at the feet of Jesus by an effusion of love, S. Thomas at the side of Jesus by a divine touch, and the beloved disciple on his Master's bosom in a sweet mystic slumber." But now, all these things are found in the Blessed

Sacrament. Father Da Ponte visited the Blessed Sacrament so often, that his biographer says it would have been the sole employment of most men. Some saints have been able to detect the presence of the Blessed Sacrament by the sense of smell, others have tasted all manner of unearthly savours in It, others have seen constant visions in It, others have heard voices from It. But we may sum up all in Father Nouet's words, speaking of the Blessed Sacrament, "As that uncreated Object is infinitely amiable, and has an infinite virtue to draw and ravish to Himself, as well as to inflame the highest part of the will, it often happens that He draws the spirit of the lover with a force so powerful, so predominant, and yet withal so sweet, in the riches of His glory, in the ocean of His delights and His beatitude, that the point of the soul is altogether absorbed, and drowned in the abyss of the Divinity; in such a way that the admiration, the regard, the love, the taste, the complacency which the soul has for its Object, cause it to faint away, and make it so attentively and strongly engrossed in the Divinity, that the activity of all the inferior senses is suspended, all their harmony is frozen, the whole body is stupified; all the limbs become stiff, and lose their power of motion, the whole mass of flesh becomes like an immovable trunk, and the man lives no longer an animal or human life, but simply a life intellectual and deiform. We have examples in the books and lives of the saints; but if any are slow to believe them, they may see this effect with their own eyes in many religious and secular persons of both sexes, to whom this happens in saying mass,

or communicating, or assisting at the divine mysteries."

Some writers, even among those who do not follow the opinion that each angel is a distinct species, teach that the grace of each angel is quite distinct and different from the graces of the others. Thus, when we consider the countless myriads of those beautiful spirits, we gain a glimpse of the abundance and magnificence of God, and of the ravishing beauty of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, in whom every one of these multitudinous and nameless graces were in their fountain and their plenitude. This is a field of contemplation which we cannot traverse in this life. But we have a foretaste of it in pondering the singular graces of some of God's chosen saints. One will touch one class of minds, and one another. Some are struck by Father Caraffa's grace, to be for forty years as if he were in the recollected fervour of a retreat; others again by the Virgin Margaret of Beaune, who became deaf whenever any one was criticizing the absent; others by S. Catherine of Genoa, who could hardly stand when she heard the word "*sin*" mentioned. But all these graces, or rather the graces which human weakness thus expresses, were in plenitude in Jesus. All this interior variety of His spouses, these graces which have no names in the schools, and no descriptions in theology, are but faint lights, weakened by mist, from the brightness of that Humanity which was assumed by Him who was "begotten before Lucifer in the splendours of the saints." "Such glory have all His saints," who, as is said of Benjamin in Deuteronomy, as "the best beloved of the Lord, shall dwell confidently in

Him, as in a bridechamber shall he abide all the day long, and between his shoulders shall be rest."

And do not all these things interest us? and do they not rebuke the spirit of the world within us? If not, have we *quite* broken with the world? and are our heart and treasure altogether where they should be? We are not such fools as to dream we even look like saints; but are we in the midst of the world's noisy perturbations resting Benjamin's rest ranking amid those "quiet ones," whom S. Laurence Justinian describes with their "humble prayer, tearful through compunction, abounding in thanksgiving, joyous with an exulting spirit, glittering with the knowledge of God, flaming with the fires of love, and whose delectable occupation is in the divine praises?"

While we are speaking of illustrations of our dear Lord and His grace, we will venture, perhaps at the risk of a smile, or a charge of exaggeration, to quote a passage from the life of the Blessed Benvenuta. It is as follows, p. 323.* "Thus Christ manifested Himself to her once in the Church of S. Stephen, which was close to her house, and where she used some time of the day to say the prayers she had not time to finish in the Church of the Blessed Dominic. Whenever the rain or any other impediment prevented her from going to S. Dominic's, she was accustomed to pray in this church, which is well fitted for pious retirement, being far from the houses and traffic of men, and therefore very quiet. Here she saw a little boy of most sanctified beauty, and with

* Where lives of the Saints are quoted only by pages, it is from the volumes of the Oratorian Lives that we are quoting.

a most joyful aspect. Benvenuta called him to her, and began to amuse him with pious words. Among other words she said to him, 'Have you a mother?' to which he replied, 'Have you a mother?' and she said, 'No! I have none,' for her mother had recently died. But he said, 'I have indeed a mother.' She enquired, 'Do you know the Hail Mary?' and he answered, 'Do you know it too?' She said that she knew it, and the child said, 'Now will you say it?' She began, 'Hail, Mary! full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus—' at this last word the Child said, 'And I am He,' and immediately disappeared." Now two things strike us about this vision. First, that it is surpassingly beautiful, and full of an air of divinity. Just as artists contemplate some fragment of old Greek sculpture, and a living fountain of beauty seems to flow from it into their minds, and they detect the characteristics of some master whom they admire, and they are filled with new ideas, and their minds are enlarged by their intelligent enthusiasm, so does it seem to us that this vision is full of Jesus, full of God's way, and therefore full of graceful unworldliness and of the gift of tears. Secondly, what an illustration it is of those words of Scripture, Sermocinatio ejus cum simplicibus, as if they could be rendered, And His *gossip* is with the simple. But on this subject we may refer to the introduction from Guilloré, which we prefixed to the Lives of the Companions of S. Alphonso, in order to anticipate objections to the memoir of the Blessed Gerard Majella.

7. Here is another source of interest, which would be a subject for a dissertation, the way in which Holy Scripture is illustrated by what we read in the lives of the Saints, and especially of the most mystical ones; and the way also in which words of Scripture seem to work miracles on the Saints, as if they were alive, and had power and spirit in them, because they were revealed words.

We may, at least, allude to a few instances of this illustration of Scripture, which may help to show also how important the study of the Divine Oracles is as a spiritual exercise. First of all take the words, Out of the mouths of infants and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise, which also express a principle of God's way of dealing. When the holy Veronica Giuliani calls out against the false weights, when the infant at Florence cries out, Saint! Saint! at S. Philip Benizi, when so many saints in their infancy refused the breast on Fridays, as if to teach a lesson to those who despise the precepts of the Church, what a meaning we have for the words in question!

The following quotation is from Benedict XIV. "It is written in Genesis, viii. 21, 'The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth,' wherefore Tobias is praised in the sacred volume, because, 'when he was younger.....yet did he no childish thing in his work,' and when he became a father, and had a son, 'from his infancy he taught him to fear God, and to abstain from all sin.' The Church praises some of the Saints, because by the innocence and sobriety of their conduct, even in their tender

years they gave indications of their future sanctity. Thus we read in the lections, which the whole Church recites in the offices of S. Antony of Lisbon, S. Bernardine of Sienna, S. Vincent Ferrer, S. Peter Alcantara, S. Norbert, S. Raymund Nonnatus, S. Bruno, and S. Francis of Sales. Indications of future sanctity in tender years, are collected from neglect of childish amusements and the pleasures of the world, from mercy towards the poor, and self-denial: as we learn from the lections which the whole Church recites in the offices of S. Nicholas Tolentino, and S. Felix of Valois, with which agree the Bulls of the Canonization of S. Rose of Lima, S. Thomas of Villanova, and S. Thomas of Hereford: 'Mercy towards the poor grew with him from his infancy,' according to the saying of Job, xxxi. 18. 'From my infancy mercy grew up with me.' '' (Heroic Virtue, ii. 394, 395.)

Both in the Old and New Testaments we have much about the influence of the servants of God over the animals, as in the case of Daniel and Elias. We have S. John Baptist living for years with the wild beasts in the wilderness, and our Lord Himself being with them forty days. So we find the saints, especially those whose innocency is remarkable, exercising the empire of unfallen man over the creatures. A lion digs a grave for the hermit Paul. Those Franciscan saints, who were distinguished by a special devotion to the Holy Ghost, and who all died on the Feast of Pentecost, held communion with and gave familiar commands to the creatures. The Lives of S. Joseph of Cupertino and the B. Sebastian of Apparizio are

full of instances. Nay, so familiar and playful was the power, that in the Chronicles of the Congregation of the Oratory, we are told that when Father Grassi of Fermo was dining under a tree at a pleasure-party, he bade a nightingale to perch upon the table, and sing to them all the while. How does all this illustrate those beautiful words of Eliphaz: "Thou shalt not be afraid of the beasts of the earth. But thou shalt have a covenant with the stones of the lands, and the beasts of the earth shall be at peace with thee: and thou shalt know that thy tabernacle is in peace, and visiting thy beauty thou shalt not sin."

The difficulties of the Old Testament history also receive great illumination from the Lives of the Saints, as well in the mixture, or rather interference of the supernatural with the natural, as in the actions which seem of dubious propriety, and are gleams of higher principles and more heavenly maxims of conduct, and more clear acknowledgments of the Divine Supremacy.

Again, the whole subject of the Evangelical Counsels finds its plainest and amplest commentary in the Lives of the Saints. The practice of poverty and the various startling manifestations of unworldliness which we find in them are cases in point. Those words about hating our father and mother, which our Lord, when He said them, must have meant for so many foreseen souls, can hardly be expounded in words; they require the actions of the saints to show what the King of saints intended. We can understand them better in the practice of S. Thomas Aquinas, S. Francis of Assisi, and S.

Peter of Alcantara, than in the pages of Tostatus, or of Cornelius à Lapide. So, Blessed are they who are not scandalized in Me, finds its truest exposition in the Lives of the Saints of God, maltreated and misapprehended like our Lord Himself: so that, strange and painful as it sounds, they who are already in heaven are stumbling-blocks to many on their road there, and are so by the very things which landed them in heaven.

There is another thing in Scripture of the deepest interest, which is at once illuminated and beautified by the Lives of the Saints. It is that doctrine of His servants being transformed into our Lord Himself by a mystical transformation: as when the Apostle says, "I live, yet not I, but the Lord Jesus liveth in me; and again, I bear about in my body the stigmata of our Lord Jesus Christ," with parallel passages. We need not dwell on the mysterious similitude of the Patriarch S. Francis to Jesus, as it is so well known. But let us weigh the following illustrations of this doctrine. Boudon tells us, in the dedication to the L'Homme de Dieu, that S. Ignatius, since his death, is wont to appear with his face veiled, and the Name of Jesus glistening on his breast; just as in his eagerness to have his life hidden with Christ in God, he prayed that his confessor might die before him, so that the world might never know the graces he had received, which made our dear S. Philip say, when he read the Life of his friend S. Ignatius, that not the one half was told, as the queen of the South said of Solomon's magnificence.

Consider also the following passage from the life

of S. Catherine of Ricci (p. 63). "What happened to Sister Maria Gabriella Mascalzoni, was, beyond comparison, more wonderful. Although she loved our Saint much, and had heard her sanctity declared by so many eminent men, her mind did not seem at rest concerning the truth of her ecstasies; wherefore, on one occasion, when she found her alone in the Oratory in an ecstasy, and no one was by, she knelt down before her, and earnestly prayed that the Lord might quiet her doubts, when raising her eyes to the Saint's face she saw it changed into that of our Lord crucified, with hair and beard like His. She was frightened at this, and would have fled, but the Saint, still in ecstasy, stopped her, and placing her face near her breast, said to her, 'Which do you think I am—Sister Catherine or Jesus?' Still more frightened at this speech, she broke out into a flood of tears, and answered in a loud voice, 'You are Jesus;' and when the same question was repeated three times, she gave the same answer; and not only was her fear changed into joy, but also her doubts into a certainty, that Catherine's ecstasies were the work of God, and not of the devil, as she herself asserted afterwards to the other nuns; moreover, when Sister Catherine was asked by her guardian, to whom she was obliged to answer the truth, how such a change of countenance could happen, she replied according to the teaching of S. Paul, 'Do you not know that God abideth in those who abide in Him?'" So also S. Theresa says it seemed sometimes as if she did not live, as if she did not speak, as if she had no will, but that some

one within her governed her and ruled her actions; and our Lord appeared to her, and said, "My daughter, the soul that gives up everything to be more entirely mine, lives no longer, but it is I who live in it." So Da Ponte says in his journal (Life, p. 271), "It appears to me that God dwells within me, so united in action, that being two, we seem but one; whilst I never undertake anything, but He also acts with me." S. Catherine of Siena, trying to persuade her confessor of the truth of this transformation, prayed our Lord to make him understand it; and in an instant the confessor saw S. Catherine's face transfigured into that of our Lord. Father S. Jure, in his life of Monsieur de Renty, says that a person of great piety, looking one day on M. de Renty, saw his face change into that of Jesus Christ. So also Boudon tells us that several times the figure of Jesus appeared externally in F. Surin, and was witnessed with great awe and devotion by many persons. The following words are taken from the account Surin gave of himself by obedience to his superiors. "I then felt Jesus Christ in me, penetrating all my members in an inexplicable manner, so that it seemed as if my soul was in glory. This visit of Jesus Christ penetrated to the very bottom of my soul. But this is not all. It seemed as if my very body had become the flesh of Jesus Christ, so that I had a great respect for my body. This view ravished my soul for more than twenty years. When, without thinking of it, I looked at my arms and my hands, I saw an object so divine and so august, that I have no terms in which to couch it. The soul found in it an

elevation and a sweetness so heavenly, that nothing approaches it." Who that reads these things does not think of our Blessed Lord's prayer, that they may be one, as Thou Father in me, and I in Thee? And oh! who does not feel how much safer and sweeter for us the common ways, the lowly walks, the food of faith, where we know where we are and what we are, than these giddy heights of bewildering view, and smooth precipices, with no hold-fast or footing, and thin air that makes us bleed while we breathe? and was not S. Philip right, who said, He who desires ecstasies knows not what he desires?

Thus of St. Camillus, that sweet spirit dwelling in rough manners, and who was a spiritual son of S. Philip, it is said so touchingly (Life i. 354), "He also wished his religious to be well grounded in the virtue of humility, and frequently gave them beautiful instructions upon it. One day he heard them talking of a certain priest, who was in great trouble through some spiritual illusions; he broke out into sighs, and said, "O my fathers, what a good thing it is to walk in the beaten track, which is to keep the commandments of God, and to practise the true virtues, and especially charity and humility. And again (p. 373), "He frequently offered to the eternal Father the bitter passion of His Son, for the sins of the whole world, and for the necessities of the Holy Church. His principal petition, which he made most importunately, was, that he would cleanse his soul from every stain of sin, and bring it back to its state of baptismal innocence. At the same time he took every pains

to keep himself from even the slightest shadow of sin. He did not court sublime flights in his prayer, but shut himself up in the wounded side of Jesus, and there, like a tender dove in its nest in the ruins, he employed himself in sweet colloquies with his Lord, and in beseeching Him to grant him every grace. Dead to everything of the world, and living only to glorify the goodness of God, he never sought delight or sweetness in his prayers, but his whole intention was directed to gain new strength to spend in his grand undertaking of saving souls."

It is very interesting to find, when we can do so, what may be called the middle term between the directly supernatural and the loftier operations of the natural faculties, to watch nature, and make it sit for its picture, just where it is running into the supernatural. This may sometimes be done, and nothing throws such light on mystical theology. It will explain our meaning to quote a Protestant interpretation of the Stigmata of S. Francis.

"So with intense desire
And inward recollection now he strove
By recitation of the blessed Creeds
To imprint a lively image of the Lord
Upon his spirit; with unflagging strain
And unrelaxing grasp of thought he held
His mind long poised upon each wondrous clause,
Each gracious lineament of saving truth,
Until the countenance of the Written Faith
Broke forth in silent voices, and each word
Sang like a trumpet in his inmost soul:
And with the ringing sound his fleshy heart
Glowed like a furnace, till the Type of Him
Whose love it echoed was annealed thereon.
Even so, when on the Tuscan Apennine
Descending autumn down the beechwood slope
Her russet mantle trailed, S. Francis knelt;
His spirit hung in steadfast rapture far

Above the atmosphere of vocal prayer,
While, 'twixt the beamy seraph's folded wings
He saw the Sacred Effigy depending,
And from the gracious Wounds, five Wells of health
To stanch the sensual issues of our sins,
There came five rays of light, which was not born
Of sun or moon, but from that Orb detached
That sheds on Sion's streets eternal day;—
The city undisclosed, whose outlines faint
Tremble with indistinct pulsation now,
Like sunset quivering on the clouds of night,
Upon the bosom of the earthly church.
Those starry pencils on his fleshy frame,
By cleansing fast and vigil now sublimed,
Haply by love, too, partially transformed
As, when the Judgment Fire is passed, all flesh
Shall be,—played for a little while, and left,
By their sharp radiance copied to the life,
The Saviour's awful Wounds. Such solemn power
Imagination on the bodily limbs
Usurps, concurring with intensest love
And long unbroken singleness of thought
And with miraculous effort outwardly
Reveals the habitual aspect of the heart,
Surely by gracious heaven not disallowed.
Thus, by a hundred witnessed, Francis came
Down from Alvernia, like a vessel sealed,
And stigmatized in fashion as his Lord."

Whatever comes of this metaphysical view of the great Patriarch's stigmata, and the theory that would mingle the natural with the supernatural in such an eminent grace as this, there is a very curious approach of nature in the life of S. Camillus of Lellis, to that supernatural appearance of Jesus in the lineaments of His creatures, just quoted from the lives of S. Catherine of Ricci, Monsieur de Renty, and Father Surin. It is faith forcing nature beyond itself, and almost over the boundary; supernatural in one sense, as grace always is, but not supernatural in the sense of mystical gifts. We read of S. Camillus as follows: (Life, i. 247.) "This tender

compassion of his towards the sick arose from his contemplating in them the Person of Jesus Christ. Thus when he was feeding them, he would often kneel down and uncover his head; *sometimes he would even ask them for grace and for the pardon of his sins, as though they were so many images of Jesus.* One night his companion found him in the hospital of Santo Spirito, on his knees before a sick person who had a gangrene in his mouth, the odour of which was quite unbearable, and yet Camillus, with his face close to his, kept saying, 'My Lord, my soul, what can I do to serve Thee?' and he used other expressions, so tender, that it was easy to perceive that in the person of the poor sick man, he imagined himself to be serving his beloved Redeemer. This holy imagination would carry him off into ecstasy, so that his face would be all on fire, and he would go leaping and dancing through the hospital without being aware of it. His companion testifies upon oath that he has often and often seen him thus carried off into ecstasy while he was serving the sick; so that we must suppose that his eyes were divinely illuminated to behold in the countenances of the most wretched creatures the lineaments of the King of glory."

To these illustrations of Scripture, we may add as another source of interest in the lives of the Saints, the light thrown by the biographies of the older Saints on the modern fashions of the spiritual life, as when we find in the life of the abbess S. Segolena, in Mabillon, the practice of confessing venial sins in the eighth century, and a very interesting essay might be written on the influence of

the old Fathers of the Desert, upon the Saints of the last three centuries, whether by means of their lives, or through the Collations of Cassian.

Even these things then, which do not belong to our own spiritual lives, and which it would be delusion in us to aspire to, are not without solid practical advantage to ourselves. It is hard not to act on mere natural motives and impulses, it is hard neither to heed nor hearken to the world's judgment, and it is harder still to kill that self-love which is within us, as if it were the very blood of our veins, or the very soul of our body. Whatever, therefore, has the effect of making us unworldly, and of familiarizing us with the associations of another world, is a real help to us, however humble our attainments may be, even in the raw beginnings of a spiritual life. When our minds become saturated with the lives of the Saints, their admirable no less than their imitable features, we are at least on the road, however far from the term, of that state which Richard of S. Victor describes. We lose our interest in the world, and as men say reproachfully of us, take no active interest in anything but God and the Church. "The soul," says Richard, "loves but one thing. It has an affection but for one thing. It burns with a passion but for one thing. It desires but one thing. It sighs but for one thing. It breathes but for one thing. It reposes but in one thing. It feeds itself on but one thing. It is satisfied only by one thing. Nothing seems to it sweet, or of pleasant savour, which is not seasoned with one thing, which is the object of its love. This chases away every other desire; this excludes

all other application; this violently tears off every other exercise, which the soul sees cannot subserve its single desire. Whatever the soul does, whatever it says, whatever it thinks, all seems good for nothing, nay, even unbearable, if it does not tend simply to the object of its desire." So it was that a thrill of joy went through S. Theresa whenever she heard the clock strike, because she was one hour nearer to Jesus and eternity. So it was that the Blessed Mary of Oignies sang for three whole days songs of seraphic desire, and then sang more sweetly still, "How beautiful art Thou, O Lord, our king! Alleluia!" and her chaste soul passed like a dove to the bosom of her Spouse. So it was that young S. Stanislas lay with the cold wet cloths upon his chest, because the boy was burning away with the desire of Jesus and Mary. So it was, and this is much to our purpose, that S. Ignatius climbed to the house-top to pray, because with a holy childishness he said he liked to feel himself somewhat nearer heaven; and then when he gazed upon the sky, he wept, and sighed, and languished with love, and was often overheard to say in quite piteous accents, "O earth! how vile it seems to me when I look on heaven!"

What we have said then seems to amount to this. There are two objections, urged for the most part by different persons, to the Lives of the Saints, on the ground of the want of interest. One concerns the *imitable* portion of the lives, which is said to lack literary, historical and psychological interest; the other has to do with the *admirable* portion, and not only questions the advisability of putting it

forward, but considers it destitute of practical interest to ordinary Catholics. So far as the first of these objections is concerned, it has been shown that the spiritual utility of these lives would be injured either by the change of form or by superior literary attraction, because that attraction could not be gained without the infusion of a different sort of interest, superseding the spiritual one. The best answer to the objection is by reminding the objector of the end with which the series professedly started. All works tell which keep true to their idea; but when they depart from it, through eager unthoughtful desire to please every one, their influence melts away. So far as the second objection is concerned, that has been met, not only by pointing to seven different sources of the most fascinating interest, but by showing that this interest is of a directly practical character, in that it supernaturalizes the mind, takes the brightness off worldly things, enlarges our views of God, and causes us to pant all the more, like hunted deer, after the fountain of the Eternal Country. May it all be for God's glory, and for the honour of His dear Saints and the manifold grace of Jesus Christ!

It is very difficult to defend anything without seeming to do so too exclusively; and people are quick to take an expression of sympathy with one work to be tantamount to a declaration of want of sympathy with another. We should be sorry if anything we have said should be construed into an indifference towards the literary and educational wants of English Catholics. No man can be guilty of a more unfortunate condemnation of himself

than such an indifference would involve. It is hard to conceive a scene of more thrilling interest than is now presented by the condition of the Catholic Church in England. Month after month it is growing more into shape and consistency. The papal gift, the new hierarchy, cannot but fructify. In the intelligent zeal of bishops, in the blameless toil of patient priests, in the seminaries, the orders, and the congregations, as well as in the works of charity and mercy, in the frequentation of the sacraments, and above all in the unanimous loyalty to the Holy See, we may behold abundant tokens of good, and thickening prophecies of a future, yet to be won by suffering, depression, reverses and endurance. The increased study of dogmatic theology and the sacred Canons, the growth and naturalization of countless beautiful devotions, and the great but blessed force of the spirit of asceticism, will bring forth fruit a hundred-fold, when we have patiently abided the taking root underground, which is to come first of all. No work is from God which is not slow. We need never despond if we remember this.

It is plain then that there are two kinds of work which we require, and which may be shortly summed up in the two words, intellectual and ascetical. It would be foolish to suppose that in a country like England we do not need literary influence, and that not only in the hope of directly Catholic literature, but also, in the Catholic way of looking at other literature. He is doing a pious work, provided God's glory is his motive, who is trying in anyway to help forward the growth of Catholic literature, or Catholic criticism, or Catholic

art, no matter which of the manifestations of art he may choose to take for his moderate and tolerant hobby. Education, the great question of the day all the world over, comes under this head of intellectual work. It would be hard to find words which could really exaggerate the importance of this intellectual work for English Catholics. Without it there is a clearly defined limit to our success. Without it victory never can be ours; and without it, failure, narrowness, pusillanimity, division, and disgrace, are inevitable. But under this head, and in this work, we cannot reckon the present series of Lives of the Saints; they were never meant to be so reckoned; and to find fault with them, because they are obviously falling short of what they should be if they were intended for an intellectual work, may perhaps, quite contrary to the intention of the critics themselves, frustrate in some degree the spiritual work they were intended to do, and with which, in its own sphere and rightly apprehended, those critics have a warm and genuine sympathy. We work at our own work, and sympathise at the same time most cordially with their work, though except in an indirect way it is no help or furtherance to ours. They also work at their work, and, let us hope, have an affectionate appreciation of ours, though it is no sort of assistance to them.

The intellectual work, therefore, is not the sole work we require. There is the ascetical work as well. This includes the transplanting and naturalizing of the devotions of Catholic countries, the study of ascetical and mystical theology, the science of mental prayer, the secrets of heroic virtue, the

knowledge of the saints and all that province of tastes, sympathies and instincts about the supernatural, which hagiology brings along with it, the cultivation of the contemplative institutes, and the formation of a school of spiritual direction. Not that any of these things are new amongst us. But who will say they have yet come to their beautiful perfection? Nay, were they ever known to come to their perfection in a missionary country? Even the virtues of the Jesuit Paraguay or the old Franciscan California were far other things. Do they not require for their legitimate development the genial shadow of the divine hierarchy, the needful pressure of a real discipline, the majestic presence of the Sacred Canons and that old law which is hardly a mere human creation, and the secure light of scholastic science round about them to guard them from delusion? If so, they will grow with our hierarchy, and the study of Canon Law will gage the progress of mystical theology.

Now it is to this department of work that the series of the Lives of the Saints belongs; and we are bold enough to maintain that not only is literary and artistic perfection not needed in this department of work, but they are more likely to be prejudical to it. And this, not only because literary endeavour would tend to confound the intellectual and ascetical works together, but would introduce into the latter an uncongenial and so probably a destructive spirit. Who does not know that there is not a more difficult problem in the whole spiritual life than the reconciliation of the literary spirit with the spirit of prayer, or the anguish which the solu-

tion of this problem often brings along with it? Who that has read much of ascetical and mystical theology, but can call to mind the almost countless passages in which, with a jealousy that looks at first sight strange and in excess, the writers warn us against literary art or studious style? Who does not remember in the history of heresies the seduction of the literary spirit, and its affinity with false doctrine? Language has been called the weapon of heretics. In works on the exact sciences we do not look for the embellishments of rhetoric, or the rhythm of composition; and the axioms of Euclid would read very oddly in the equipoise of genuine Johnsonian sentences. So also is it with spiritual books, and treatises of ascetical theology. If literary ornament is worth anything, it must attract the reader's attention; and we naturally wish to attract his attention in proportion as we fear his want of interest in the subject matter. The ornament is the gilding of the pill. The will is interesting enough to the legatee, and the act of parliament to the magistrate, without the charms of style. So with spiritual books. They are not read for their intellectual interest, neither have we any object in coaxing simply intellectual people to read them, as we have to captivate them with Catholic history, or philosophy, or even polemics. Nay, whatever attraction there is in them over and above their subject matter, is in reality a distraction; and so an injury. And is not the tradition of the saints about spiritual reading, of which several instances have been given in the foregoing pages, quite in accordance with all this?

We do not mean to say that the literary spirit is necessarily fatal to the spirit of prayer. The Dominican saints teach us the contrary. So does the peculiarly mystical character of piety of the almost canonized Bellarmine. And Suarez with his twenty-one double-columned folios, his community acts of Jesuit life, and his seven daily hours of mental prayer to boot. And Cardinal de Lugo, going in his subtle perplexities to consult the boyish novice, John Bercmans, that God might reveal to the prayers of the novice the science withheld from his own comprehensive intellect. The whole doctrine about infused science is but an illustration of the same. We do not want to exaggerate the matter, but only that the view should be admitted for what it is worth. Each of the two departments of work, of which we are speaking, have their own methods of attaining success, and they differ widely the one from the other. The ascetical work is effected rather by God than man, rather by grace than intellect, by prayer than argument. Hence there is a feeling of the utter infirmity of human means, as well as a very vivid experience of God's presence and co-operation, which interferes with the literary spirit, even in man's share of the work, and produces a sort of negligence and inartistical slovenliness, which some look on unfavourably, while to others it is a token of earnestness and reality. The works of S. John of the Cross may be quoted as an instance of this. Thus of S. Camillus, who was all for work, it is said, "He was very particular about the education of the young, and did not wish their spiritual fervour to be cooled by scientific studies,

nor their love of mortification and other virtues decreased by it." What are called among the Jesuits "Fathers of the Third Year" witness to the same truth. Thus also, though it may be thought to imply a condemnation of ourselves, one of S. Philip's first Oratorians says, "The spirit of the press (lo spirito della stampa) is uncongenial to the spirit of our congregation." He expressed a truth, though he did not mean to take from us the benefit of the inspired rule, Omnia tempus habent, et suis spatiis transeunt universa sub cœlo.

There are many difficulties about this question; and unintellectuality is very far indeed from being simplicity. Indeed it is very hard to be unintellectual and simple at the same time. It is perhaps not possible for a man to be harmless as a dove, in the Christian sense, if he is not first of all, and in the same sense, wise as a serpent. Ignorance or indolence often put in their claim to be considered simple; but this is merely stupid; and those who feel no intellectual aspirations to mortify can hardly be sagacious preceptors in that school of mortification. Such men can talk calmly out of their devout dulness; but their words go with no unction to those who are in real torture, because they cannot settle the balance of two quarrelsome responsibilities, the activity of the intellect, and the drawings of prayer.

What we are saying comes to this. The more literature the better, only in its place. We hardly want anything so much. And a religious order can be given up to literature, as the Dominicans prove, who in the number of Saints are said to be before

all the other orders. And speaking of our own kind of work, we repeat, that unless the ecclesiastical sciences flourish, high spirituality can never flourish either ; and be it remembered, it must be the ecclesiastical sciences in the wide and magnificent sense of the term, not the mere narrowness of moral theology, or the art, however useful, of not making mistakes in the confessional. Such knowledge as this, if exclusive, is far from being on a level with the exigencies of the times. Still everything in its place ; and there is surely some meaning in that sweet sad cry of Franciscan devotion, which has now grown into a proverb, O Paris! Paris! thou hast spoiled Assisi !

This must mean something, and history gives us examples. To say nothing of the emperor Julian, we have Eusebius in old times, and in more recent days Erasmus. If the Arian heresy was propagated and rooted by means of beautiful vernacular hymns, so who will say that the uncommon beauty and marvellous English of the Protestant bible is not one of the great strongholds of heresy in this country? It lives on in the ear like a music that never can be forgotten, like the sound of church bells which the convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities seem often to be almost things rather than mere words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of the national seriousness. Nay, it is worshipped with a positive idolatry, in extenuation of whose grotesque fanaticism its intrinsic beauty pleads availingly with the man of letters and the scholar. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereo-

typed in its verses. The power of all the griefs and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments, and all that there has been about him of soft, and gentle, and pure, and penitent, and good, speaks to him for ever out of his English Bible. It is his sacred thing which doubt never dimmed, and controversy never soiled. It has been to him all along as the silent, but O how intelligible voice, of his guardian angel; and in the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant, with one spark of religiousness about him, whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible. And all this is an unhallowed power! The extinction of the Establishment would be a less step towards the conquest of the national mind, than, if it were possible, (but we are speaking humanly, and in our ignorance,) to adopt that Bible, and correct it by the Vulgate. As it is, there is no blessing of the Church along with it, and who would dream that beauty was better than a blessing?

Has not the same thing been said of Luther's Bible in Germany? In both countries the language was in great measure settled by the translation, and literature almost started from it, at least vernacular literature; for we do not forget that Luther lamented that his friends would not let him throw Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, into the fire, and that Osiander tells us that Stork taught that to learn human science was a sin. This was the lamentation of Erasmus. Heresy was nothing to him, nor the blaspheming of the Sacraments, nor the contempt of the Holy See, so long as all was literary, refined,

and polished. "I dislike," says he, "these gospellers on many accounts, but *chiefly* because, through their agency, literature everywhere languishes, lies drooping, and perishes; and yet without learning, what is a man's life? They love good cheer and a wife, for other things they care not a straw." (Maclachlan, p. 201.) What wonder that that man of infallible instincts, quicker than sight, plainer than hearing, more subtle than smell, the great Ignatius should forbid the works of Erasmus to be studied in his society?

Much to the purpose is the grave authority of the Blessed Pope Gregory. It is thus that he concludes the epistle to Leander, which stands as preface to his wonderful commentaries on Job. "I beg that in going through the statements of this work, you would not seek the foliage of eloquence therein: for by the Sacred Oracles the vanity of a barren wordiness is purposely debarred those that treat thereof, in that it is forbidden to plant a grove in the temple of God. And doubtless we are all of us aware, that as often as the over-rank crop shows stalks that abound in leaves, the grains of the ears are least filled and swelling. And hence that art of speaking itself, which is conveyed by rules of worldly training, I have despised to observe; for as the tenor of this epistle also will tell, I do not escape the collisions of metacism, nor do I avoid the confusion of barbarisms, and I slight the observing of situations and arrangements, and the cases of prepositions; for I account it very far from meet to submit the words of the Divine Oracle to the rules of Donatus. For neither are these observed

by any of the translators thereof, in the authoritative text of Holy Writ. Now as my exposition takes its origin from thence, it is plainly meet that this production, like a kind of offspring, should wear the likeness of its mother. Now it is the new translation that I comment on; but when a case to be proved requires it, I take now the new and now the old for testimony, that as the Apostolic See, over which I preside by ordinance of God, uses both, the labours of my undertaking may have the support of both." (Greg. Morals, Oxf. trans. pp. 10, 11.)

The lives of the saints, it was hoped, would be a fair contribution to the ascetical work of which we have spoken. It was thought that it would help forward every department of it very materially. And we have not been disappointed of our hope. It is now nearly seven years since the first steps were taken towards the publication. How many were the doubts, the difficulties, the disappointments! How many the fears, the thwartings, the despondencies, the beginnings of drawing back! The rooms at Oscott can witness, where the then coadjutor of the Central District combated the doubts and fears, made himself the foster-father of the series, and bore it triumphantly over obstacles, which less confidence in the goodness of the plan, less devotion to the later saints, many of whom were little known in England, and less generosity in staking his own name and credit on the soundness or discretion of a convert, never could have surmounted. There is a story told of the deathbed of Surius, that in the last agony all the blessed spirits,

and there were hosts of them, whose lives he had published, assisted and supported the dying man. May the saints of our series do the same for our kind patron, when His Eminence shall come to die, and it is but one of many reasons for trusting that day is far, far off, that the longer it shall be delayed, the more saints there shall be to lighten the darkness with their beautiful ministries!

Spiritual reading is the vestibule of prayer; and in a country like our own, where weary work is our austerity, it may often keep steady our spiritual life when bodily fatigue is too great for the toil of systematic meditation. When the temptation comes to the over-wrought labourer in our Lord's vineyard to seek recreation in the world or worldly news, and to fall back upon creatures for support and for repose, how often do the lives of the saints step in, and keep him quietly to God and holy thoughts! And what a blessed office is this! Yet these lives breathe asceticism; and even when used as a spiritual recreation, they will make this spirit felt in the soul. Men catch asceticism from them as by contagion. And what shall we not do when we become ascetic?

A priest's locomotive power is prayer. Unless it be sacraments that are needed, half an hour before the tabernacle will do more for his parish than days of the fret and fever of human activity. Intercession is more eloquent a thousand times than admonition. And if the mysteries of Jesus and Mary have not become familiar to him in all their many-sided aspects through daily persevering meditation, how shall he be a fluent preacher, or unction go out with his fluency, or his sermons make it always high-tide

in the confessional? And if he does not immolate active duties to the daily task, amply allowed for, of examen of conscience, above all particular examen, how shall he, who does not so much as suspect the secret meanness or duplicity of his own interior man, minister with sage humility and tender-hearted discernment to the scruples, the illusions, the pusillanimities of others? And how shall a priest have power with God, who has an interest in the world? And where shall he find a surer antidote against the circumambient pestilence of the secular atmosphere, than in the light airs of Paradise, which breathe forth from the sayings and the doings of the Saints? And what is all this but sweet asceticism?

Men have often wondered how religious orders get through so much work, especially when the mere observance of rule, and the discharge of community duties, occupy at least three or four hours of the day. While they are necessarily limited in the extent of work to which they apply themselves, there is often a completeness, intensity, success, and perseverance, about what they do, which seems disproportioned to the visible efforts made. It is the Unseen Arm that does it, the secret of Sampson, the spirit of asceticism. Here, again, the locomotive power is prayer, mortification, obedience, holy community. O the power of one community, one only, flourishing in strict observance! God only knows its might, and the day of judgment alone can adequately reveal its far-spreading, unsuspected benedictions. And how do the lives of the Saints invigorate and brace this spirit of observance! And this, too, is but sweet asceticism!

And blessed be God! we have also amongst us some contemplative institutes. It was but a few weeks ago that we heard a prince and pastor of the Church congratulating himself that we had some communities, whom the zeal of the Lord's house was devouring in the silent thirst of prayer, rather than in the outpouring of the heart upon external works of mercy; for the country is all loose and out of joint for want of prayer. And we who are members of active communities,—we shall be scorched and withered away by the glare of the noonday toil, if we be not cooled by the abounding dews, and overshadowed by the gracious clouds of the cloistered and the contemplative? Is not prayer more than work, though there must be both work and prayer? Is not unction more than eloquence? Is not grace mightier than activity? Is not holiness downright power? Is not God's eye life, and the world's eye death? Is not the unseen more than the seen? Is not the watched conscience a charm to souls, and the neglected conscience the spring of rough words, sour looks, and the repelling of sinners? Does not the interior man preach without speaking, and can the distracted man ever be an Apostle? To disbelieve all this, is it not implicit Protestantism? And to believe it practically, what is it but sweet asceticism?

Yet it all runs counter to the habits of mind of a Protestant country. It gainsays national axioms, which ooze into us in spite of all our faith. Our instincts are stolen from the Church, while she is honoured with the allegiance of our understandings. Yet to be in sympathy, mere sympathy, with the

Church, seemed to S. Ignatius to be like all holiness; while to be out of sympathy, merely out of sympathy, with the Church, brought forth on this side of the Alps Jansenism and Josephism, and on the other side the illuminism of Naples and the Synod of Pistoja. Our tastes are Protestant while our worship is Catholic. Our sympathies do not warm to the supernatural, for English activity whirls us along, and who shall take sketches from the windows of an express train? God is slow, and He will not be hurried, and the supernatural must be looked at a second time to be sure it is not a delusion, and a third time to be worshipped for what it is, and then we have so fallen in love with it, that we cannot leave it nor pass on, and thus the world must go forward without us; and indeed why not? for is its journey's end ours also? But the lives of the Saints are a world of their own. There are the weights and the measures of the sanctuary. There the peace which is power, and the calmness which is activity. There the axioms of the Sacred Heart are the standards of all deeds; and the world's black is our white, and the world's white darker than black to us. And there is a fragrance of Paradise, though we see not yet its flowers. And a spirit in the air, which is health to the soul, for it is fresh from the heights of Sion. And "there is a sound of One going in the tops of the pear trees," and it is God "gone out *before us* to strike the army of the Philistines;" this is our activity. And there is "the Lord God walking in Paradise at the afternoon air," as it was all afternoons before the fall; and this is the sweet peace of our interior lives. It

is there, as from a hill top, facing into the illimitable sunset, that we get our first glimpse of the "many mansions of our Father's house," and sometimes of Him who is "preparing a place" for us therein. O how unutterably drear is the world's spreading night-cloud in the east, when we turn round upon its heavy purple folds, and let its cold gloom dash the golden light out of our eyes. But the Saints call us on; we must on; no turning round like Lot's wife; no turning back like the poor coward ploughman of the Gospel; the blessed spirits will lay kind hands on us, and drag us on, if need so be; our home, our goal, is in the glorious heart of that living sunset; we saw it, there was no mistake; it was plain; there were *many* mansions; we must on: we shall reach it by the time night has fallen on the earth.

Let it not seem rude or proud to quote the words of St. Augustin, (De Moribus Eccles. i. 31.) "I will say nothing of those whom I have spoken of above, those, who, concealed entirely from the sight of men, inhabit the most wild and desolate regions, content with bread alone, which is brought them at certain intervals of time, and water; but enjoying their closest intercourse with God, on whom their pure spirits rest, and most happy in the contemplation of His beauty, which cannot be perceived except by the intellect of the Saints; of these, I repeat, I will say nothing; for they seem to some, who little understand how much we are benefited by their dispositions in prayer, and by their life in the way of example, though we are not permitted to see them with our bodily eyes, to have retired from

human things much more than was their duty. But to discuss this matter would be tedious and useless; for how can this exalted height of sanctity, if it be not spontaneously honoured and admired, be so through our speaking?"

We fear we have been long; but indeed the sketch threatened to turn into a volume.

Now all these things which have been hinted at are quite independent of the literary interest men desire to find in the Lives of the Saints. Literature has its place. It is not easy to exaggerate its importance. But that which has its place has therefore its limits. Protestant habits of mind drag us along with them, and make us enlarge these limits unduly; for Protestantism, which does not conceive of grace, cannot conceive of the propagation of opinions otherwise than by intellectual influence, or by a sort of agitation which does not in reality spread opinions, but only swell a party. Men catch the faith by contagion, as well as submit to it through reasoning; or in other words, God is pleased to give it in as many ways as there are many minds of men. He would either be very inconsiderate, or care little about God's glory, who should be cold in his desire for intellectual activity and a Catholic literature in England. Yet when we are busied with the Saints, we are dealing with men, the motto of whose lives might rather be the Psalmist's words: *Quoniam* non cognovi litteraturam, introibo in potentias Domini.

F. W. F.

The London Oratory,
Feast of S. John of the Cross.
1852.

THE LIFE

OF

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR,

FATHER CANDIDE CHALIPE, RECOLLECT.

WHEREIN THE PREJUDICES OF CERTAIN PERSONS AGAINST THE MIRACLES WHICH ARE RECORDED IN THE LIVES OF SAINTS ARE SHOWN TO BE BOTH UNREASONABLE AND DANGEROUS, AND THAT THE MIRACLES ATTRIBUTED TO SAINT FRANCIS ARE VERY WELL AUTHENTICATED.

A VERY common failing amongst men is to adopt one extreme in the endeavour to avoid another, and sometimes not to perceive that the extreme into which they fall is greater than that which they had sought to flee from. To insure themselves against weak incredulity, some have imbibed such prejudice against the miracles in the Lives of the Saints, that they cannot endure to hear of them; the very ideas of miracles, revelations, ecstasies, visions, apparitions, are hateful and disgusting to them; all that is said on these subjects they look upon as fabulous and incredible; they call in question the most undeniable evidence, or attribute these wonders to natural and unknown causes. The wonders which are recorded in the Life of St. Francis, afford an opportunity of grappling with these pre-

judices; it must first be shown that they are unreasonable, of which here is the proof.

In the first place, no man using his right reason will reject the wonders recorded in the Lives of the Saints, because of their impossibility: there are only such senseless individuals as Spinosa, who venture to say that miracles are impossible, and by arguments as absurd (1) as they are impious, attempt to limit the almighty power of God; and subjecting it to a sort of necessity, destroy the idea of the all-perfect Being. Miracles are extraordinary events, which break through the laws of nature, and exceed the force of all natural causes; it is only necessary to make use of our reason to be aware that God, whose power is infinite, having freely established these laws, may, whenever He thinks fit, break through them Himself by the ministry of His creatures, whom He makes use of as He pleases: that these suspensions may enter into the external designs of His wisdom and providence, and that they occur by successive acts without there having been any change in Him, because it is an act of His will which causes them, as it does every other thing. Now this proves that miracles are possible, and that there is no impossibility in the wonders recorded in the Lives of the Saints.

(1) See Réflexions sur l'Atheisme, by Father de Tournemine, and the Mémoires de Trevoux, July 1722, Art. 66. on the book entitled La Réligion Chrétienne prouvée par les Faits, the author of which, the better to triumph over Spinosism, another subject of miracles, has, without thinking of it, furnished him with arms by a singular opinion. Mr. Tournely refutes it, and shows that it is a mere chimera. Prælect. Theolog. de Incarn., quæst. 3 p. 263.

In the second place, these wonders ought not to cause an incredulous surprise in any sensible person who pays due attention to the wonders of nature. "Man," says St. Augustine, "sees extraordinary things happen, and he admires them, while he himself, the admirer, is a great wonder, and a much greater miracle than any things which are done by the intervention of man. There is nothing marvellous done in the world, which is not less wonderful than the world itself. All nature is full of what is miraculous; we seem unconscious of it, because we see those things daily, and because this daily repetition lowers them in our eyes. And this is one reason why God has reserved to Himself other things out of the common course of nature, on which He shows His power from time to time, in order that their novelty may strike us; but when we consider attentively, and with reflection, the miracles we constantly see, we find that they are far greater than others, however surprising and uncommon these may be." (2)

The holy doctor admits, that the prodigies which are out of the common course of nature, and which are properly called miracles, are to be viewed with astonishment, since they are works

(2) Videt homo insolita, et miratur—cum sit ipse mirator magnum miraculum. Serm. 126. alias 32. ex homil. 50. Omni miraculo quod fit per hominem majus miraculum est homo. De Civ. Dei. l. 10. c. 12. Quidquid mirabile fit in hoc mundo, profecto minus est quam totus hic mundus, Ibid. Omnis natura rerum plena miraculis. Epist. 102. alios 49. n. 5. Trin. 24. in Joan. n. 1. et alib. Quamvis miracula visibilium naturarum videndi assiduitate viluerint; tamen cum ea sapienter intuemur inusitatissimis rarissimis-que majora sunt. De Civ. Dei., sup.

of God, worthy of admiration; He only requires that the surprise they cause shall be qualified by a consideration of the wonders of nature, to which He likewise gives the name of miracles in a more extended sense: on the same principle, and à fortiori, what there is surprising in them should not make them appear to us incredible. An enlightened mind does not believe in miracles which are communicated to him, unless due proof of them is adduced; but it is not because what is wonderful in them renders him incredulous, because he sees more marvellous things in the universe and in himself. If men who apply themselves to the study of nature, are pertinacious in refusing to believe in the miracles of the Saints, it is because they do not make use of the light they have received, and do not reason deductively; they have only sought to gratify their curiosity, or to gain credit for their discoveries; and do not some of them lose themselves in their speculations, and become impious, even so as to recognize no other God than nature itself?

In the third place, faith in the great mysteries of religion must incline us to believe in the wonders we read in the Lives of the Saints. We say to the Calvinists,—"You believe the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection; why then are you so obstinate in refusing to believe the real Presence? They are all equally wonderful and incomprehensible." Are we then not called upon to say to those whose prejudices we oppose: "As you belong to the so-

ciety of the faithful, you not only believe that Three Persons make only one God; that the Son of God was made Man; that the dead shall rise again; but also that Jesus Christ becomes every day present on our altars under the species of Bread and Wine at the words of consecration, and you believe all the other astonishing wonders that are proposed to you in our holy religion; why then do you find such repugnance in believing those of the Lives of the Saints, which are far inferior to the former?"

It is useless to say in answer, that these last are only based on human testimony, which we are not obliged to receive; that the mysteries are propounded to us by Divine authority, to which we are bound to submit; for this is not the question before us. We only compare one wonder with another, and we maintain that the belief in the one should facilitate the belief in the other. In fact, if we believe with a firm and unshaken faith what God, in His goodness, has been pleased to effect for the salvation of all men, and what He continues daily to effect in the Eucharist; may we not easily convince ourselves that He may have given extraordinary marks of His affection for His most faithful servants?

In the fourth place, similar wonders to those which are found in the Lives of the Saints, are also found in the Holy Scriptures. Raptures, ecstasies, frequent visions and apparitions, continual revelations, an infinity of miracles, miraculous fasts of forty days, are things recorded in the Old and New Testaments. We believe all

these wonderful circumstances, and we are obliged to believe them, although they far surpass our understanding: on what, then, shall we rely for maintaining that the wonders recorded in the Lives of the Saints are improbable, and that we may reasonably call them in question? Reason, on the contrary, marks them as so much the more probable and worthy of credit, as we know and believe similar ones which we may not doubt of. Christians should be accustomed to what is marvellous, and require nothing but proofs for the most unusual prodigies.

In the fifth place, the promise which Jesus made, that the power of working miracles should be given to true believers, gives authority to the belief in miracles in the Lives of the Saints. "Amen, Amen, I say to you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do he shall do also, and greater than these shall he do; because I go to the Father. And whatsoever you ask the Father in My Name that will I do." (3) "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover." (4)

Our Saviour, according to the doctrine of the holy Fathers, (5) has promised the gift of mira-

(3) John xiv. 12, and 13.

(4) Mark xvi. 17, and 18.

(5) S. Chrys. de S. Babyla contra Gent. no 12, edit nov. S. Augus. de Civit. Dei. lib. 22, c. 8, et Retract. lib. 1. c. 13, et 14. S. Greg. moral. lib. 34, n. 7, edit. nov.

cles, not to each one of the faithful in particular, but to the Church in general; and His promise is for all times when the good of religion requires its accomplishment. Heretics pretend that it only related to the days of the Apostles, and that miracles were only required for the establishment of the Faith. What right have they to limit the words of the Son of God? Do they imagine that they understand the Scriptures better than the holy Doctors? How will they prove that since the time of the Apostles there have been no combinations of circumstances in which the good of religion shall have required that miracles should be performed? They were required for the infidels, to whom the Gospel has been preached in different centuries, as well as for the Greek and Roman idolators, to whom it was first announced. The Church has required them to silence the heretics who have successively endeavoured to impugn her dogmas, and to strengthen the faith of her own children. They have been always useful for manifesting the eminence of virtue, for the glory of God, for the conversion of sinners, for reanimating piety, for nourishing and strengthening the hopes of the good things of another life. We are therefore justified in saying, that the promise of Jesus Christ is for all times in certain occasions, and that the belief in the miracles in the Lives of the Saints is authorized thereby.

In the sixth place, that there have been miracles in the Lives of the Saints are facts the proofs of which are unquestionable. The acts of the

martyrs, which have always been read in the Church, and the genuineness (6) of which has been admitted by the most talented critics, contain recitals of the most wonderful events: the confessors of the faith, instantaneously cured, after having undergone the most cruel tortures; wild beasts tamed and crouching at their feet; lights and celestial voices, apparitions of Jesus Christ and His angels, and many other wonderful circumstances.

In the first six centuries there are scarcely any ecclesiastical writers and holy Fathers who do not record miracles worked by the servants of God and by their relics; and they speak of them as of things which they have either seen with their own eyes, or were of public notoriety.

Saint Justin Martyr, in the second century, speaking of the power of Jesus Christ over the demons, in his Apology addressed to the Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, and to the Roman Senate, says: "You have proofs of what passes before your eyes, and in your city, and in all the rest of the world. For you know that many of those possessed, not having been able to be delivered by your exorcists, enchanters, and magicians, have been so by the Christians, who have exorcised them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate." (7)

Saint Ireneus assures us that in the same

(6) See Dom. Thierri Ruynard, Præfat. in Acta Martyrum, and Father Honoré de Sainte Marie, Réflexions sur les Règles et sur l'Usage de la Critique, Dissert. 4, Art. 1, et seqq.

(7) S. Justin, Apol. 2. sec. 1, p. 45.

century some true disciples of Jesus Christ had received supernatural gifts, which they made use of advantageously for other men: "Some," says he, "drive away devils; and this is certain, that often those who have been delivered embrace the faith and join the Church. To others it is given to know the future, and to have prophetic visions. Others cure the sick by the imposition of hands, and restore them to perfect health. Very often, even in every place, and for some requisite cause, the brethren solicit, by fasting and fervent prayers, the resurrection of a dead person, and obtain it; these dead, thus revived, have lived with us for several years afterwards. What shall I say further? It is not possible to enumerate the extraordinary gifts which the Church receives from God, and what she operates in every part of the world in favour of the nations, in the name of Jesus Christ crucified." (8)

"We can," says Origen, writing against Celsus, "show an immense multitude of Greeks and barbarians who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ; there are some who prove their faith by the power of working miracles. They cure the sick by invoking their God, the Creator and the Sovereign Lord of all things, and the Name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, of whose Gospel they recite a part. We ourselves have seen several sick persons delivered from the most formidable

(8) S. Iren. cont. Hæres. lib 2, c. 32, alias 57, n, 4 and 5, c. 31, alias 66, n. 2 and 3, lib. 5, c. 6, n. 1.

maladies, and the cured are too numerous to be counted." (9)

Tertullian, in his Apology, and in another work, records plainly the miraculous fall of rain which was obtained from heaven by the prayers of the Christian soldiers, which saved the army of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, which was reduced to the last extremity. He proves the truth of this fact by the very letter of the Emperor. (10) We have also authentic proofs of this event in the authors and records of paganism itself. (11) Tertullian likewise tells us, that the pagans received extraordinary graces by means of the Christians, some of which he quotes, and he adds; "How many persons of distinction, without mentioning other people, have been thus delivered from the devil, and cured of their evils." (12)

St. Cyprian upbraided an idolator in the following terms, while refuting him: "The gods whom you adore we exorcise in the name of the true God, and they are compelled to leave the bodies which they possessed. Oh, if you chose to see and hear them, when suffering under the power of our words, as if they were spiritual scourges, and feeling the secret operation of the Divine mastery! they howl terrifically, entreat of us to spare them, declare in presence of their adorers whence they came, and confess a future

(9) Orig. cont. Cels. lib. 3, p. 124, and lib. 1, p. 5, lib. 2, p. 62, lib. 8, p 337, Edit. Cantabrig. 1658.

(10) See M. de Tillemont, Histoire des Empereurs, tom. 2, p. 407, et seq. Lib. ad Scapul. suprà.

(12) Tertul. Apol. n. 5, p. 6, et lib. ad Scapul. n. 4, p. 71, Edit. Rigalt.

judgment. Come and be convinced of the truth of what we say; be at least moved. Those whom you adore fear us; those to whom you pray entreat of us to spare them; those whom you revere as sovereigns are as prisoners in our hands, and tremble as so many slaves. We interrogate them, and in your presence they declare what they are; they cannot dissemble the impostures which they make use of to deceive you." (13)

Such are the miracles which many of God's servants operated in the second and third centuries, and which cannot be called in question. How many different kinds are recorded in subsequent times by St. Basil and by St. Gregory of Nissa, in the Life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus; by St. Athanasius in the Life of St. Anthony; by Sulpicius Severus in the Life of St. Martin; by St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Augustin, St. Paulinus, in many parts of their works; by Theodoret, in his religious history; by Pope St. Gregory, in his dialogues; by St. Hilary of Arles; St. Ouen, and very many others worthy of credit!

These saintly and learned Bishops, Avitus, Metropolitan of Vienne, Stephen of Lyons, Eon of Arles, conferring with the Arians in presence of Gondebauld, King of the Burgundians, after having proved the consubstantiality of the Word, by the testimony of the Scripture, and by powerful arguments, offered to give additional proof

(13) S. Cypr. ad Demet. p. 201, et de Idol. var. p. 206. Edit. Rigalt. et alibi.

thereof by miracles, if the heretics would promise to acquiesce in consequence, and quoted the example of St. Remigius, Apostle of the French, who was then living, and setting up the Faith on the ruins of Idolatry, by a multitude of prodigies. (14)

The miracles operated by means of relics, are neither less well authenticated, nor less celebrated; they were known to the whole world. St. Augustin was an eye-witness of them; being at Milan when St. Ambrose discovered, by means of a revelation, the spot where the bodies of SS. Gervasius and Protasius reposed. (15) He saw a great many miracles performed in Africa, by the relics of St. Stephen, of which he makes mention in his book of the City of God, (16) written for the confutation of the most learned of the Pagans, wherein he says, that to quote only those operated in the dioceses of Calame and Hippo, several books would not suffice. Nicetius, Bishop of Treves, writing to Clodosvinda, or Glotinda, Queen of the Lombards, to exhort her to solicit the conversion of King Alboin, her husband, advised her to make use of the visible miracles which were operated at the tomb of St. Martin, and by the invocation of St. Germanus, St. Hilary, St. Lupus, St. Remigius, and St. Medardus. (17) They were so evident, that the heretics dared not call them in question, and could not deprive them of their

(14) Spicil Dacher, tom. 5 p. 110.
(15) S. Aug. Confess. lib. 9 cap. 7.
(16) De Civ. Dei lib. 22 cap. 8.
(17) Concil. General. Labb. tom. 5, p. 835.

splendour ; God made use of these for the conversion of kings, and of entire nations. (18)

In all ages after the six first centuries, the prodigies of the Lives of the Saints are noticed by numerous authors of all countries, whose talents, learning, probity, holiness, and dignity, render them respectable to the most searching critics. They are supported by incontrovertible evidence, by juridical depositions, by authentic acts, and by splendid monuments which have been erected to their memory by bishops, princes, magistrates, cities, and kingdoms, to perpetuate the recollections of these splendid achievements. We find that the saints have made numerous predictions, which have been justified by the event ; and that either moved by the Spirit of God, or compelled by obedience, they have admitted the supernatural operations which they felt in their souls. Finally, the prodigies which are found in the Lives of the Saints, have always been considered as indubitable facts amongst the faithful ; the Church recognises them, and they form one of the objects of their piety and devotion ; no one is placed in the catalogue of Saints whose sanctity has not been attested from heaven by means of miracles, and she takes such rigorous precautions, and carries their strictness so far (19) that, according to all

(18) Grey. Turon. de Mirac. S. Martini lib. 1 cap. 11.

(19) In the Life of the Blessed John Francis Regis, of the Society of Jesus, Father Daubenton, of the same society, Confessor to H. M. Catholic Majesty, mentions an anecdote of an English gentleman, a Protestant, which shows the scrupulous exactness of the Holy See in the verification of miracles. Book vi. p. 334 in quarto.

human prudence, it is impossible she should be deceived.

We now ask, whether it can be permitted to think and to say, that such facts are absolutely false, and should only be looked upon as fables unworthy of credence? In such case it would be necessary to abrogate the rule judiciously and universally received in the world, that facts which have nothing incredible in themselves are not to be controverted when duly proved; it would be also necessary to refuse credence to all that is related in sacred and profane history, to lay down as a maxim to believe nothing but what we see, and to refuse to receive the testimony of the honourable people with whom we live. Now this is what is requisite to prove and convince every man of good sense that the prejudice against the miracles of the Lives of the Saints is quite unreasonable; but this does not point out its quality sufficiently; it is senseless and ridiculous, it is rash, and what is more, it is dangerous.

The Protestants are opposed to these marvels, as, indeed, they are to almost everything that is religious. They do not call in question the evidence—on the contrary, they produce it, and we find it correctly set forth by the Centuriators of Magdeburg, in each century; but because it was confirmatory of the truth of the Catholic Church and its dogmas, which they did not choose to believe, they affected to say that the narratives were fabulous, or delusions of the devil; they were even daring enough to say, that the Fathers of the Church were either imposed upon, or im-

postors ; they cast aside all tradition, the Saints were considered as visionaries, and they turned into ridicule canonizations grounded on miracles.

Catholics ought to be cautious in adopting anything coming from heretics ; their opinions are almost always contagious. This is apparent in systems, which, so to express it, border on theirs, and lead, in a course of reasoning, to erroneous conclusions, which indeed are denied, but without being able to show that they are inconsistent. We admit that all those who are prejudiced against the marvels in the Lives of the Saints, do not go so far as the Protestants do ; the excesses of the latter, however, are the natural, necessary, and almost immediate consequences of such prejudices.

Whoever denies what the Fathers of the Church attest as having seen, or having been authentically informed of, must conclude that they were either very credulous, or deceived the people. To refuse to believe the marvels which have reached us by an uniform and universal tradition, is to call in question all tradition, to render all its channels suspicious, and to cause it to be looked upon as a questionable proposition. What can be thought of the Saints, if the miraculous graces which they certify that they have received from God, are to be treated as chimeras ? if the accomplishment of what they have foretold, is to be attributed to chance ? What even can be thought of their most heroic victims ? What opinion will be formed of their acts ? Will they be deemed more trustworthy in other matters ? When

it is asserted that there have been no miracles since the days of the Apostles, it must be said, by a necessary consequence, that the Church, which grounds canonization on miracles, makes use of falsehood in that most solemn and religious act, and that the public worship which the Church directs is uncertain. Now this very much resembles heresy; for the great principles of religion teach us (20) that on these occasions the Church receives peculiar enlightenment from the Holy Ghost, by which she can neither be deceived herself, nor can she deceive others.

These miracles, it is said, are not articles of faith, and the Church does not oblige us to believe them; as if nothing was believed in the world but such things as are of faith; as if it was not dangerous obstinately to reject those things which are sanctioned by the authority of the Holy Fathers, by reason and by piety, by tradition and by the Church, and which cannot be rejected without fatal consequences.

This incredulity attacks, moreover, one of the proofs of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, which the Fathers adduced against the Pagans. St. Chrysostom having asserted, on the subject of the miracles of the martyr St. Babylas, that our Saviour on the night of His Passion, had promised to those who should believe in Him, the power of working these miracles, adds: "It had been antecedently seen that many had taken upon themselves the character of masters, who had disciples,

(20) Melch. Canus. Loc. Theolog lib. 5 quæst. 5 conel. 3. M. Tournely, De Eccles. tom 2, p. 586 and 587; et alii.

and who boasts of performing wonders ; nevertheless we do not hear of any who had ventured to promise their disciples the same power ; the insolence of their impostures did not go so far, because they knew that no one would believe them ; all the world being convinced that it is only given to God to make a similar promise, and to fulfil it. (21) On this principle the holy Doctor proves, that Jesus Christ is God, since He has given to those who believe in Him the power of working miracles, which His disciples actually did, and which His servants now do. St. Augustin makes use of the same proofs in his Book of the City of God. Thus the miracles of the Saints have in all ages been adduced as proofs of the Divinity of our Saviour ; and this is what those endeavour to do away with, who, without reflection, consider them as fables. (22)

Another danger is, that they speak of these marvels according to their own prejudices. They openly say, that they do not believe them, and that persons ought not to have the weakness to believe them ; they speak contemptuously of the books in which they are recorded ; they cannot endure that they should form part of panegyrics of the Saints. They make use of impious derisions and turn into ridicule the faithful who credit them and they censure the conduct of the Church which consecrates them. Such discourse sanctions heresy and licentiousness ; worldlings and the indevout applaud it, the tepid seem to consent to it,

(22) S. Aug. De Civit. Dei. Lib. 22, cap. 10.

(21) S. Chrys. lib. in S. Babyl. et contra Gent. tom. 2 p. 536. n. 1 and 12. edit. nov.

and the falsely devout approve it; it is a scandal to the weak, and a dishonour to religion.

It is also to be feared that prejudices against what is wonderful in the Lives of the Saints, may spread to other subjects, if we only judge from the principles which are the cause of them. For in what do these principles consist? They are not grounded on reason or religion; they must therefore have a basis of incredulity for everything which they do not understand; the foolish vanity of being thought singular; ignorance, which boldly repudiates what it knows nothing of; keeping company with libertines; a conformity of feeling with heretics, and the spirit of the world, which is the enemy of all piety. Such calamitous causes give room to fear the most fatal effects.

In general, the liberty only to believe those things which we choose, on points in which religion is concerned, is very dangerous; it often makes a destructive progress, for its first attempts embolden it. Persons are easily persuaded that all miraculous narratives are false, though the church guarantees the truth of many; and when this same church pronounces on dogmatical facts, declaring such and such propositions to be heretical, which are in such and such a book, and exacts an interior submission (23) of heart and mind, do

(23) The interior deference of mind and heart which the Church requires for the decision of dogmatic facts, must be extended so far as to consider this decision as infallible and irreclaimable. It is what the Abbé Tourneley invincibly establishes, by the proofs which he brings to this conclusion; "Ecclesia accepit à Christo auctoritatem judicandi de sensu seu doctrina propositionum, librorum

these doubters shew more docility? Do they obey even in swearing to obey? Do they not cloak their disobedience by a respectful silence, always ill kept, and finally broken through by open rebellion? Do not we see persons in the world, speaking irreverently of relics, purgatory, indulgences, and even of the holy mysteries, after having treated contemptuously the marvels of the Lives of the Saints?

Certain critics admit these marvels, but have imbibed the idea that falsehood is so mixed up with the truth, that they cannot be separated but by using certain rules, which they take upon themselves to lay down. This prejudice is not less dangerous, nor less unreasonable than the other.

Because some inconsiderate writers, who cannot be too severely censured, have given scope to their imagination in certain legends, and have employed fiction for the embellishment of their narratives, the doubters pretend that the whole history of the Saints is full of impostures: nevertheless pure sources have been the basis of their authentic acts, in the works of the Fathers, and in an infinity of authors well worthy of credit, and in the Bulls of canonization. An Asiatic priest, as related by St. Jerome, who quotes Tertullian, (24) composed false acts of St. Thecla, through an ill-understood sentiment of devotion; does it

et auctorum, ac fideles ad suam subscribendam sententiam compellendi: cui proinde tenentur illi acquiescere interna mentis et judicii adhæsione, non solo, ut vocant religioso silentio: atque certum est nec errori obnoxium hujuscemodi Ecclesiæ judicium. De Eccles. tom. ii. Art 5. p. 533. et seq., p. 446. et seq.

(24) St. Hieron. de Script. Eccles, in Luca.

follow from that that the truth of many other acts which were there read, and which we still possess, are to be set aside? Moreover, the Church has remedied the evil, she has rejected the false prodigies, she has expunged from the legends the indiscreet additions; a new edition (25) has been long since placed in the hands of the faithful, which only contains the well-authenticated and certain miracles.

A learned man (26) has demonstrated that the rules of these critics for the elucidation of these miracles, are not judicious, that they are extravagant, and that it would be risking too much to follow them; that they are contradictory, and not in unison with each other; that it often happens that they reject or admit miracles against their own principles. If they find splendid ones, and many of them in the same legend, they hold them to be suppositious, or altered, although the oldest and most authentic documents contain similar ones; they reject them as false, without assigning any reason in proof of their having been falsified; they pretend that the authors who have recorded them, were too credulous, though they

(25) There are two in French, which the faithful may safely read: the one by the Rev. Fathers Martin and Giry, of the order of Minims, of which there are many editions: the other by the Rev. Father Croiset of the Society of Jesus, entitled: "The Lives of the Saints for every day in the year, with moral reflections at the end of each Life. In 2 vols, folio, at Lyons, at the Widow A. Baudet, 1723.

(26) Father Honoré de Sainte Marie, a barefooted Carmelite in his "Réflexions sur les Régles et sur l'Usage de la Critique, tom. i. Dissert. 4, Art 3, 4, and 5, and in other parts of that work condemns everywhere all ultra-criticism.

receive other articles on the testimony of these same authors. In order to believe them they require perfect certainty, although they give credit to many circumstances in ecclesiastical and profane history on mere probabilities. One of them (27) professes not to omit a single miracle which is vouched for by good authority ; nevertheless he suppresses many of the most considerable ; and many of those which he feels compelled to bring forward, he does so, in terms which mark doubtfulness, to say nothing more.

Thus, the ultra critics, while admitting the wonders of the lives of the saints, reduce them to nothing by rules which they invent for separating truth from falsehood, as those who profess to believe an infallible authority in the church, make that infallibility to depend on so many conditions, that they may always maintain that the Church dispersed, or asembled, has never come to any decision in opposition to their errors.

It is, they say, the love of truth, which induces them to examine most scrupulously the miracles of the Saints ; nothing should be believed, or be proposed to belief, but what is true. But Bossuet (28) said of bad Critics : " They are content, provided they can pass for more subtil observers than others ; and they find themselves sharper in not giving credit to so many wonders." The love of truth, does not consist in denying its existence, where so many persons of first-rate genius have found it ; it does not depend on ren-

(27) M. Baillet, in his Notices on the Lives of the Saints, No. 7. [This work is on the Index of prohibited books.—*Oratorian Editor.*[

(28) Instruction on the New Testament of Trévoux, p. 21.

dering obscure the light it sheds, nor in giving to the public lives of saints accompanied by a dry, bitter, and licentious criticism, calculated to throw doubt on all that is extraordinary in them, and thereby to give scandal. The learned Jesuits, the continuators of Bollandus, show by the precision of their researches that they are sincere lovers of truth : but we do not see that they endeavour to diminish the number of miracles, "they have no idea of taking them for fictions ; nothing astonishes them in the lives of the friends of God, provided it be well attested."(29) Father Thomassin, of the Oratory, in his Treatise on the Celebration of Festivals, (30) speaks of a miraculous event which occurred in the sixth century, and which is reported by Bollandus, and he adds: ' These sort of miracles are by no means articles of faith, but nevertheless they are not to be rejected by sage and considerate persons. Upon reading the works of St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and St. Jerome, and those of St. Gregory of Nyssa, of St. Basil, and St. Athanasius, we can have no doubt that these Fathers had no difficulty in believing similar occurrences, similarly attested. St. Augustine, indeed, has related several much more incredible ; and it is greatly to be feared that to set oneself above the Augustines, the Jeromes, the Gregories, and the most learned Fathers of the Church, must be the effect of a most dangerous pride."

(29) See Mémoirs de Trévoux, 1722, January, Art. 3, p. 96 and 97.

(30) Liv. 11. Chap. 21, n. 16, page 475.

It is objected, that the multitude is credulous, that it likes the marvellous and should not be exposed to believe untruths. But credulity is far less dangerous than incredulity ; the one admits of cure much easier than the other ; the former, in proper limits, may be very useful, the latter engenders nothing but evil. Some one (31) has said, that the love of the marvellous is the ancient malady of mankind ; it would perhaps be more accurate to say, that it is a remainder of their original greatness ; and that being created to witness the marvels of the Divinity, they are impelled by an interior impulse to believe whatsoever seems to them to approach to them, until such time as their vision shall be fully gratified. This impulse only becomes a malady, when it receives wonderful things which are absurd, or without any foundation. Aversion from the marvellous, which has its origin in the weakness of a mind oppressed by sin, is a much greater malady, and may have most dangerous consequences, in a wholly marvellous religion which we must love. These marvels are displeasing in pious narratives, where they are fully proved, and they are sought for in theatrical compositions, where they are mere fictions : the distinction is dishonourable to Christians. Finally, as to the falsehood ; what risk does the pious multitude run, in believing the miracles of the lives of the saints ? They find nothing in them, which is not proved, or worthy of belief ; nothing but what may very

(31) M. de la Fontaine.

prudently be believed, nothing but what is edifying ; and this, according to St. Augustine, (32) is a sufficient guarantee from falling into any dangerous credulity.

We should be very dangerously credulous, if we put our faith in false and deceitful miracles which only tend to seduce the mind and corrupt our belief. We are warned in the Gospel, that " there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if it be possible) even the elect," (33) and St. Paul teaches us that Antichrist, " that man of perdition, will come according to the working of Satan in all power, and signs and lying wonders. (34)" The Father of lies has often inspired the heretics to produce miracles, which they have asserted to have been performed by persons of their party, living or dead, from whence they inferred that God authorised the doctrines they taught. Ecclesiastical history furnishes many examples of this, and there are some very recent ones.

But Jesus Christ has furnished us with a sure and infallible rule to avoid the contagion ; it is to hear the Church ; (35) it is, to consider those only as true miracles of which she approves, and of which she sanctions the publication ; it is to believe firmly that no one who is in revolt against the Church, will ever perform a miracle favourable to his sect, whatever appearance of austerity,

(32) St. Aug. de utilit. cred. cap. 11, No. 25.
(33) Math. xxiv. 24. (34) 2 Thessal. ii. 7.
(35) Math. xviii. 17 ; Luke x. 16.

piety, charity, or sanctity he may put on; which St. Thomas bases (36) mainly, on this principle, that it is impossible that God, who alone can give the power of working a true miracle, shall ever communicate that power to confirm a false doctrine. From whence it follows, that all the miracles produced by sectarians, notwithstanding all their evidence, and all their pretended attestations, must neither be examined nor listened to, and must only be looked upon as purely natural effects, or as impostures, or as delusions and diabolical operations. This is the way in which St. Augustin (37) expresses himself on the subject of the miracles which the Donatists claimed to have performed, and claimed as evidence in favour of their schism. Let Catholics therefore reject, with horror, the false prodigies of sectarians; but let them piously give credit to the miracles of the Saints, without paying attention to the ultra-criticism which strives to throw doubts upon them; and let them be intimately persuaded, that the Church which approves of them has founded that approval on evidence irreproachable.

The marvels which are found in the Life of St. Francis, are perfectly well attested. (38) That Life was first written by Thomas de Celano, one of his companions, who was directed by Pope Gregory IX. to compile it, and who afterwards added a second part on additional me-

(36) 1 Part. quæst. 110, Art 4, et. 2, quæst. 178. Acts ii. and iii.

(37) S. Aug. de Unit. Eccl. c. 19, n. 49, and Tract 13 in Joan, n. 17.

(38) Wading, Annal. Min. ad ann. 1230, n. 7, ad ann. 1244, n. 8, 9 and 10.

moirs. (39) John, or Thomas de Ceperano, Apostolic Notary, who was a staunch friend of the Saint, published at the same time what he knew of his actions. Crescentius de Jesi, General of the Order of the Friars Minor, gave directions by circular letters, to collect and transmit to him whatever had been seen, or learnt, relative to the sanctity and miracles of the Blessed Father. He addressed himself particularly to three of his twelve first companions; Leo, his secretary and his confessor, Angelus and Rufinus; all three joined in compiling what is called "the Legend of the three Companions." The others noted separately what they had themselves seen, and the things which they had learnt from others. Saint Bonaventure, being at the head of the Order, was urgently entreated by the general chapter, to write the Life of their holy Patriarch. With the intention of learning with certainty the truth of the facts, he went expressly to Assisium. "There," he says, in the Preface to his work, "I had frequent and serious conferences with those who had been in the confidence of the great man, and who were still living; and principally with those who were most intimately consociated with him, and who have become the most faithful imitators of his holy life; to whose testimony we must undoubtedly give credit, because their acknowledged sanctity assures us that they have spoken truth." Now

(39) His first work was called "The Legend of Gregory IX.," and the second "The Ancient Legend."

what can the most exact and severe criticism wish for more, in order to give warranty to the marvels in the Life of St. Francis, than contemporaries, ocular witnesses, holy persons, his own companions, who lived with him and enjoyed his confidence?

The Legend of Saint Bonaventure was spread everywhere as soon as it appeared, and was everywhere highly approved; there are many manuscripts of it. Lipoman, Bishop of Verona, caused it to be printed in 1556. No one ever attempted to call its accuracy in question. (40) Octavian quoted it in his Petition to Pope Sixtus IV. for the canonization of the holy doctor in 1482. (41)

The first Legends have been preserved in manuscript; the celebrated annalist of the Order of Friars Minor, Luke Wading, saw them and made use of them. He was one of the most learned men of his time, (42) and all other learned men have been loud in his praise, (43) not only on account of his profound erudition, but because

(40) No one but M. Dupin could have added at the end of the Catalogue of the works of St. Bonaventure: "They also attribute to him the Life of St. Francis, noticed by Surius, October 4th." This expression is only used as to doubtful works. Did he not know that no writer, either Catholic or Protestant, ever called in question the Life of St. Francis written by St. Bonaventure? or did he wish to cause it to be called in question?

(41) Octav. Orat. § 11, apud Sedul. Histor. Script.

(42) He lived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when erudition and criticism were in their prime.

(43) Francis Harold, who made an abridgement of his Annals in two volumes printed at Rome in 1762, wrote his Life at the head of the first with the commendations which had been given him by Raynald, Manrique, Leo Allatius, Sponde, d'Artichy, and several other great men of the seventeenth century.

he was so ardent a lover of truth, which he sought for with great care, and having developed it, nothing could hinder him from publishing it and committing it to writing.

The uprightness of his heart was conspicuous on a certain occasion which is too honourable to him for us to pass it over in silence. He had been one of the examiners nominated by Pope Innocent X. to inquire into the writings of Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, and he had convinced himself that the five propositions, which appeared to be censurable in those writings, might be tolerably explained in a certain theological sense. Those who are themselves upright, are not easily brought to think ill of others, particularly in difficult affairs, and they sometimes endeavour to justify them, through charitable feelings, which are praiseworthy in principle, but which may have evil consequences, when a doctrine is in question which has been widely spread, and which is supported by a cabal. Wading, seeing that the five propositions were censured by various Constitutions of the Pope, made a Report (44) on the whole affair, with the following beautiful declaration worthy of a truly Catholic Doctor: "If, before this decision, any one shall have been of a different opinion (as to the five propositions) on whatever reasonings, or whatsoever authority of doctrine, he is now obliged to bend

(44) See Défense de l'Eglise contre Leyddecher, by Père Quesnel, second edition, p. 427. L'Histoire des Cinq Propositions, by the Abbé du Mas, tom. 1, liv. 1, p. 79, of the edition of Trévoux 1702. The Abbé de Tournely, tom. 1, De Gratiâ, quæst. 3, epoch. 2, p. 382.

his mind to the yoke of faith, according to the advice of the Apostle. I declare it to be what I do with all my heart; condemning and anathematising all the aforesaid propositions, in all and every sense in which His Holiness has proposed to condemn them, although before this decision I thought they might have been maintained in a certain sense, in the manner I have explained in the suffrage which has been just seen."

We may feel assured that a man of this upright character, such a lover of truth, and moreover one of such eminent talents, would not have made use of the two legends of Thomas de Celano and that of the three Companions, without having ascertained their correctness. Moreover the critics of his time, who were particular and in great numbers, had it in their power to examine them as those of our times have also, since they are still extant in the convent of St. Isidore at Rome.

The first which was composed under the Pontificate of Gregory IX., was quoted by Luke (45) Bishop of Tuy, when he wrote against the Albigenses in 1231. It is to be found in the Abbey of Longpont (46) of the Order of Citeaux, in the diocess of Soissons, and in the Abbey of Jouy, of the same Order in the diocess of Sens. The Legend of the three Companions is in the king's

(45) Luc. Tud. ad. v. Albig. lib. 2, cap. 11.

(46) Dom. Martene, a Benedictin, notices it in his Voyage Littéraire, p. 74.

library, at the Recollets of Louvain, (47) and in their convent at Malines.

These are the principal sources which were consulted by Wading for writing the Life of St. Francis, which forms part of the first tome of his Annals. He also consulted the Acts and public monuments, the constant tradition, and some manuscripts of the thirteenth century, which contain other testimonials from the companions of St. Francis, and were published by contemporaries who lived with them, who collected their very words, and who are worthy of credence. But the most marvellous thing which he relates, relative to the actions of the Saint, he has taken from the Legends, as well as a great number of the splendid miracles, which were operated by his intercession after his death, and of which Pope Gregory IX. was fully informed, as he declares in the Bull of canonization.

All modern authors, who have given the Life of St. Francis in various languages, have adhered solely to Wading; in this work also we have made a point of following him; and the learned,

(47) Surius speaks of this Legend, at the end of the Life of St. Francis, as of a work which was before him, and which he did not give to the public lest he should be too voluminous. Cardinal Baronius in his notes on the Martyrology, October 4th, says that the Companions of St. Francis, such as Leo, Angelus, and Ruffinus have left many particularities in writing, besides what are in the Life written by St. Bonaventure.

Dom. Martene had the letter printed from the MS. which the three Companions had addressed to the general of the Order, when they sent him their Legend; it is similar to what Wading has given: Veter. Scrip. tom. I, p. 1298, ex M. S. Canonic. Regular. Agoniæ Christi Tungrensium.

who have so much esteem for that great man, will agree that we could not have taken a better guide. Baillet admits, that among the writers of the Life of St. Francis, Luke Wading is one of the most careful and most accurate; and yet he taxes him with not having written methodically, when he adds; "After all the labours of so many persons, who have been zealous for his glory, we are still compelled to wish for a methodical history of his Life." Whoever may read the Annals of Wading and his notes on the works of St. Francis, will find in them as much method as research and accuracy; but according to some ultra-critics, it is not considered writing methodically, when marvels, which they dislike, are permitted to find their way into history.

Baillet might have said that it has been long a subject of complaint, that we have not in our language a complete and methodical Life of St. Francis. This complaint (48) is the more just, as the Saint had a particular liking for France, he had learnt the language with so much facility; and spoke it so readily, that they gave him the name of Francis, (although he was baptized John). Paris was one of the first objects of his zeal; he would even have gone thither, if a Cardinal had not detained him in Italy, for reasons which related to his Order. Not having it in his power

(48) Those which have been heretofore published, are seldom met with; they are full of piety, but it must be admitted that they are neither methodical nor complete, and they would not now be received as they probably were in former times.

to undertake this mission, which he had much at heart, he destined for it some of his principal followers.

It has been our study not to omit anything here which bears upon the subject, and to arrange everything methodically. The work is divided into six books,* in which are related, in chronological order, the actions, words, and instructions of St. Francis, the establishment of his three Institutes, and, generally, all the facts relating to them from his conversion to his death. Those things which had no particular date, or which required some particular discussion, or which were to be defended in reply to some ill-judged criticism, have been treated of in the fifth book, between his death and his canonization; after which, what can be said as to the situation of his body, is brought forward, and the state of his three orders is given. The singular favour of the stigmata, that is to say, the impressions of the wounds of Jesus Christ upon the body of St. Francis, and the plenary indulgence which he obtained from our Saviour, by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, for the chapel of the Portiuncula, or Saint Mary of the Angels, are noticed in the course of his Life, in all their details; it was however necessary to write a particular history of the Stigmata and to give some elucidations as to the indulgence, to vindicate the truth of these facts against heretics and ultra-critics who have dared to attack them.

Some of the wise of the world would have

* The present volume contains three of these books.—*Oratorian Editor.*

wished, that, in order to meet the prejudices of those who dislike the marvellous, some part at least of them, should have been suppressed in this Life of St. Francis: but having clearly shown that these prejudices are unreasonable and dangerous, it would not have been proper to have paid attention to them; besides which, the Life of the venerable Patriarch is chiefly written for his children, and for persons of piety, who would not have tolerated such a curtailment.

There are some who affect to think that in the Lives of the Saints, their example should alone be proposed to the public, imagining that the miracles they have performed can nowise contribute to the edification of souls; and two authors (49) of this century have ventured to suppress all miracles in the Lives of Saints which they have published. The Church, nevertheless, causes them to be recited in the Divine Office; and they are carefully related by the holy Fathers; neither does any author of repute of the centuries preceding, fail to bring them forward. In fact, no one can deny that they add great resplendency to the merits of the Saints, and

(49) In the beginning of this century, M. Echard de Commanville, published a Nouvelle Vie des Saints, in which he only admitted miracles recorded in Scripture. See on this subject the Memoirs de Trevoux, May and June, 1701, p. 64, et seq. An anonymous writer has also omitted the miracles, on pretence of not increasing the size of the volume, in the Lives of the Saints for every day in the year, &c, printed in 1722, by W. Despreg and J. Désessarts, but he has found sufficient room for introducing many pernicious things in points of doctrine, as we may perceive from the work itself, or by faithful extracts in the Memoirs de Trevoux, Oct. 5th, 1722, Art. 107.

consequently give great weight to the example they afford us. They uphold and increase the idea we have of the power of God, of His providence, His justice, His bounty, and His mercy, by which they excite us to glorify, love, and serve Him; and in showing His special good will to His servants, they induce us to invoke their mediation with confidence. Moreover, miracles strengthen the faithful in their faith, because, being performed in the bosom of the Catholic Church, they confirm the truth she teaches. Now, it is not of less consequence to strengthen faith, than to propose that which tends to the correction of morals, particularly when incredulity makes as much progress as licentiousness. Moreover, the miraculous actions of the Saints frequently contain most salutary instructions, and are always accompanied by virtues which may be imitated; which will be very apparent in the Life of St. Francis.

Some may perhaps think that his virtues are too transcendant for imitation, and content themselves with admiring them, without gathering any fruit from them. A celebrated Heresiarch admired them in this manner in the last century. Bossuet remarks in his excellent History of the Variations, (50) that "Luther reckoned among the Saints not only St. Bernard, but also St. Francis, St. Bonaventure, and others of the thirteenth century; and that St. Francis amongst all the rest, appeared to him to be an admira-

(50) Histoire des Variations, tom. I. liv. 3, n. 50.

ble character animated with wonderful fervour of mind." But the faithful, in admiring his virtues, must not think them not to be imitated, for they consisted in following the Gospel, and they are all obliged to live according to the precepts of the Gospel.

CANDIDE CHALIPPE, RECOLLET.

THE LIFE

OF

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

BOOK I.

We here offer to the pious reflections of the Faithful, the life of a man who proposed to himself to practise literally the precepts of the Gospel, and to conform entirely to Jesus Christ crucified, and to inspire the whole world with his love; who became a singular model of penance, whom God favoured with the most precious gifts of His grace, whom He honoured with favours until then unheard of, whom He constituted the Head of an Apostolical Order, founded solely on His Providence, and which was wonderfully spread for the service of His Church.

Such a purpose must seem great to all those who can appreciate true grandeur by the light of Religion. In its contempt of the goods of the world, it manifests an elevation of mind far above the ostentation of the ancient philosophers; in its deep humiliations, an heroical courage; in its extreme simplicity, the most exalted sentiments; in its weakness, and in the apparent foolishness of the cross, the strength and wisdom of God. The

infidels themselves admired all this, and it will be not less meet to revive the fervour of Christians, and to increase the veneration they have always entertained for St. Francis.

He was born at Assisi, a town of Umbria, in Italy, in the year 1182, under the Pontificate of Lucius III. Peter Bernardo,(1) his father, was a rich merchant, whose principal commercial transactions were with France. His mother, whose name was Pica, had only two sons, Francis and Angelo. The latter married at Assisi, and some of his descendants were still at Assisi in 1534.

God, who has often condescended to usher in His saints by portents, was pleased, at the birth of Francis, to give signs of what he would be during his life. For some days Pica had suffered great pains, without her confinement having been the result; when a man, dressed as a pilgrim, came to tell her that she would only be delivered

(1) Ottavio, Bishop of Assisi, says in a book entitled, "Lumi Serafici di Portiuncula," printed at Venice, 1701, p. 6 and 7, that when he was preaching during Lent in the cathedral church of Lucca, in Tuscany, in the year 1689, a canon named Morican, showed him an old memorial, in which he read these words: "There were at Lucca two brothers merchants, named Morican. The one remained in his own country, the other, called Bernard, established himself at Assisi, where he was called Bernardon. He married and had a son called Peter; who, being already wealthy, married a girl called Pica of a noble family. St. Francis, who was their son, called himself sometimes, out of humility, son of Peter Bernardon; not choosing to take his family name, which was Morican."

It is probably of this origin that Thomas Walsingham, a Benedictine, said that Francis was a Tuscan; which is also noticed in an in old Flemish chronicle.

The Bishop of Assisi adds, that the branch of the Morican family, which remained at Lucca, was there in his time, and was the number of its nobles.

of her infant in a stable, who would be born on straw. Although this communication appeared most strange, they nevertheless acted upon it. The patient was removed to the nearest stable, where she was successfully delivered ; an event which may well be looked upon, as in the intention of Providence, thereby to mark the conformity of the holy man to Jesus Christ, poor and humble ; as much, at least, as the creature can be in conformity with the Creator, and the servant with the master of the universe.

This stable has been turned into a chapel, called in Italian, " San Franceso il piccolo," St. Francis the little ; there is over the door the following Latin inscription, in very old writing :

> " Hoc Oratorium fuit Bovis et Asini stabulum,
> In quo natus est Franciscus, mundi speculum.
> This chapel was the stable of the Ox and the Ass,
> Where Francis was born, the mirror of the world."

His mother had the name of John given to him at his baptism, his Father being then absent in France. A stranger presented himself as his godfather and he was accepted as such ; whether it was, that something extraordinary was perceived in this person, or that they had been struck with astonishment at the first event. The uniform tradition at Assisi is that this stranger disappeared after the ceremony, and that he left the impression of his knees on a marble step of the altar, which is shewn in the cathedral church, with the baptismal font, on which these words in Italian are engraved :—" Questi e il Fonte, dove fu battezzatto il Serafico Padre San Francesco."

At the return from the baptismal ceremony, a man, who seemed to have been sent by God, as well as the other two, or rather an angel in human form, came to beg that he might be allowed to see the child and hold it. He took it in his arms, caressed it a good deal, and impressed upon its right shoulder a well-formed cross, as a mark of his consecration, recommending the nurse to take particular care of the child, not to expose him to the snares of the devils, who had a foresight that he would one day wage a severe war against them. One of these evil spirits was obliged to confess by the mouth of one possessed, whom they were exorcising, that the princes of darkness, alarmed at the birth of Francis, had tried various ways to take away his life ; and it was the Saint himself who expelled this devil afterwards. These portents, (2) marvellous as they are, are less surprising, when we consider the singular and marked favours which heaven destined for him.

His parents brought him up with great care, and he was put to study with the clergy of the Parish of St. George. After he had acquired some knowledge of letters, he was initiated in commercial affairs, the correspondence of which, necessitated his learning the French language ; he acquired it with so much ease, that his father

(2) Prophecies of the celebrated Abbot Joachim are also noticed, relative to St, Francis, St. Dominic and their orders, made long before the birth of either. They are admitted as authentic by the learned Jesuits of Antwerp, the continuators of the Acts of the Saints of Bollandus. But they assign reasons for not believing that this Abbot placed portraits of these two Saints in the church of St. Mark at Venice, as some writers assert. Act. SS. tom. 7, Maii, die 29, § 8, p. 141.

gave him the name of Francis, a name which he bore (3) ever after.

Bernardo and Francis pursued their avocation in a very different manner. The first, with no other object than his worldly interest, thought of nothing but his profits, and had no other care than that of accumulating. Francis, who had not a particle of avarice, and had less thought of his profit, than of dealing with honour, traded with nobler and more elevated feelings. But he loved the world, he frequented society, and spent a good deal in dress, festivities, and parties of pleasure. His father frequently reprimanded him on the subject of his expences, but his remonstrances had little effect, because he had no consideration of the value of money, and he wished to be distinguished amongst his young companions who always considered him as their leader. His mother who was tender and generous had more patience with him ; and she said to those who spoke to her of his profusion, that from what she remarked in his conversation, in his actions, and even in his amusements, she had reason to hope something great when he should come to maturer years.

Indeed, in all his demeanour, excellent prognostics for the future were observable ; his temper was exquisite, mild, and condescending, his man-

(3) Wading, and others, believed that he was the first who bore the name of Francis. But Mabillon found this name without any sirname in the Cartulary of Châteaudun, written at the beginning of the twelfth century, and he remarks, that it was the first time. We see also in the Italia Sacra, that the Bishop of Arrezzo in 1188, was called Francis.

ners were agreeable and very polite; he was lively, and had great good sense; he was brave, and had a strong inclination to be generous, even to give beyond his means. Although he plunged into the vain amusements of the world, there was nothing blameable in his moral conduct. By the special protection of heaven he avoided the rocks on which youth is too often wrecked; he preserved the inestimable treasure of purity; it was also remarked that he was distresed at any licentious expressions, and never made any reply to them.

God had imprinted in his heart great feelings of compassion for the poor, which increased from his infancy, and which induced him to afford them liberal aid, so that, following the Gospel precept, "Give to every one that asketh thee,"(4) he made a resolution to give to all who should ask alms of him, and principally if they should solicit it for the love of God. This feeling for the love of God had its effect upon him, even then, notwithstanding his dissipation; he could seldom hear the expression made use of, as he has since admitted, without being sensibly affected. It having once happened to him in the hurry of business, to turn away a poor person who had asked a charity for the love of God, his conscience smote him immediately, and he ran after the poor man, relieved him amply, and made a promise to God that he would never refuse a single individual as long as it was in his power, when an alms should be asked for His love,—a promise which he faithfully kept to his death, which, as St. Bonaventure remarks,

(4) Luke vi. 30.

was of essential service in increasing the grace and love of God in his heart. What is there more likely to bring down the grace of conversion and sanctification, and increase the love of God, than the practice of works of mercy ?

The amiable qualities of Francis, rendered him a favourite throughout the town, where he was looked up to as the flower of the youth, and great hopes were entertained for the future in his regard. A man of simple manners, but enlightened from above, caused a still greater esteem to be entertained for him. When he met him in the streets, he spread his cloak on the ground before him, and as a reason for shewing him so unusual a mark of respect, "This young man," he said, "will soon do great things: he will deserve all sorts of honours, and will be revered by the faithful." Francis who was unconscious of the designs of God, did not understand the meaning of this prediction. He knew not that these honours were to be rendered him only after severe humiliations according to the words of the Gospel.(5) Engrossed by the affairs of the world, and attached to its vanities, he thought little of this divine truth, and he had less taste for it; nevertheless he hoped that he should some day receive the honours which others foretold: and which God permitted him likewise to predict of himself in an affliction which came upon him.

The towns of Assisi and Perugia were at war with each other ;(6) he was taken prisoner

(5) Math. xxiii. 12.

(6) These two towns may have taken opposite sides when Marcuald or Marcomald laid waste the lands of the Church. Rayn. an. 1188-9.

with some of his fellow citizens: whether it was that he had taken up arms in the service of his country, or that he was beyond the limits of the town on his commercial affairs. His captivity, however, did not affect his spirits, he preserved his cheerfulness and good humour. His companions, who were dejected and cast down, were offended at this, and upbraided him with it, saying, that he might at least out of feeling for them, disguise his satisfaction. "I am very sorry for you," he replied, "but as to myself, my mind is at ease, and I am thankful that it is so. You see me now a prisoner, but at a future period, you will see me honoured by the whole world." There was one among the prisoners whose quarrelsome temper and extreme ill humour caused him to be shunned by the others. Francis entreated them to draw a distinction between his person and his defects, and to bear with him; not being able to induce them to do so, he had the charity to keep him company himself, and by his good advice, he rendered him more gentle. All were so delighted with the goodness of heart, that they sought his friendship.

Liberated from captivity, he returned to Assisi, where God visited him with a long and severe illness, which reduced him to a state of great weakness. This was to prepare his soul for the influence of grace. As soon as he could walk, he wished to enjoy the beauty and air of the country; but he failed to be pleased therewith, and was even disgusted with what he had previously liked the most; he felt contempt for

what he had before esteemed, and his own conduct appeared to him to be senseless. This change surprised him much, but it did not as yet make any alteration in his heart. The return of health renewed his attachment to the world, his ambition and vanity revived; he entertained fresh hopes of greatness, and paid once more great attention to his dress. Thus it frequently happens, that when God sends illnesses to worldly persons with a view to their conversion, these have no other effect than momentary reflections and promises, which are soon forgotten on the return of strength.

However, Francis became more and more charitable, and gave to all the poor either money or his clothes. Having met a poor and ill-clad officer, who was of a noble family, he saw in him the poverty of Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and being moved to pity, he gave him the new suit of clothes he had on.

The following night, God showed him in his sleep a great and magnificent palace, full of warlike arms, all marked with the sign of the cross, to give him an idea of the reward his charity was to receive. He asked who all that belonged to; and he was answered, that the arms were for his soldiers.

Not as yet understanding the meaning of mysterious dreams he took this as a token of the success he was to have in warlike achievements, without suspecting that the crosses he had seen had a totally different signification. At that time Walter, Count of Brienne, in Champagne,

was waging active war against the emperor, in the kingdom of Naples, on the subject of the claims of his wife Alberia, the eldest daughter of Tancred, king of Sicily, who had been some years dead. Francis resolved to offer him his services, in the hope of gaining military honours. He attached himself to an officer of distinction, who belonged to the count's army, and he set out with a good retinue, after having assured his friends that he was sure of acquiring great renown.(7)

He first went to Spoleto, and there Jesus Christ addressed these benevolent words to him during the night: "Francis, which of the two, think you, can be of the greatest service to you, the master or the servant, the rich or the poor?" "It is the master and the rich," he answered without any hesitation. "Why then," continued our Lord, "do you leave God who is master and rich, to seek man, who is the servant and poor?" "O Lord!" exclaimed Francis, "what is it your pleasure I should do?" Jesus Christ then said to him, "Return to your town; what you have seen signifies nothing but what is spiritual. It is from God, and not from man, that you will receive their accomplishment." The very next morning he retraced his steps towards Assisi, to await the orders of the Lord, without troubling himself as to what the world should say as to this precipitate return.

His friends came as usual to propose a party of pleasure. He received them, as was his custom, with great politeness, and feasted them

(7) Maimb. Hist. des Crois. tom. 2, lib. 9.

magnificently, to bid them, thus honourably, an eternal adieu. On parting from them, he found himself suddenly struck with the vanity of all terrestrial things, and with the grandeur of all that is heavenly, by a communication from the Spirit of God, full of mildness, but so internal, and so forcible, that his senses were brought into a state of inaction, and he himself remained motionless. He afterwards told his confessor, that if he had been torn to pieces in this state of rapture, he would not have felt it; that, in that moment, he could only feel at the bottom of his soul. The company, quite alarmed, drew near him; and when he had recovered his usual serenity, they enquired of him, laughing, what had occasioned his extraordinary reserve; if, perhaps, he was not thinking of taking a wife? "It is so," he replied, "I shall take one, but one so noble and so beautiful, that such another will not be to be found in the whole world." Evangelical poverty, which he afterwards embraced, was the spouse to which the Holy Ghost inspired him to allude.

After this divine favour he disembarrassed himself as much as possible of his commercial affairs, to beg of God to know what He would have him do; and he usually went to pray in a grotto with a confidential friend, who left him there in entire liberty. The frequent recourse to prayer excited in his heart so ardent a desire for the celestial country, that he already looked upon everything that was earthly, as nothing. He felt that this happy disposition contained a treasure, but he did

not as yet know how to possess himself of the hidden prize. The Spirit of God merely insinuated to him that the spiritual life under the idea of a traffic, must begin by a contempt of the world, and under the idea of a warfare, by a victory over self. All spirituality not based upon these two divine lessons, will never have anything solid in it.

Francis had soon occasion to put these lessons in practice. As he was riding across the plains of Assisi he perceived a leper coming straight to him. At first he felt horror-stricken, but calling to mind that he had formed a resolution to labour to attain perfection, and that in order to be a soldier of Jesus Christ, it was necessary to begin by obtaining a victory over self, he dismounted, kissed the leper, and gave him an alms. When he had again mounted his horse, he no longer saw any one, though he looked all round the plain. Filled with astonishment, and transported with joy, he began to sing the praises of God, and formed a firm resolution to aim at still greater perfection. This is the effect of generous and courageous efforts, they draw down fresh graces, and reanimate our courage. He acquired also more inclination for retirement, ; he had no longer any liking but for solitude, for those places which were adapted to the holy sorrow of penance, where he unceasingly addressed himself to God in fervent prayer, accompanied by lamentations, which cannot be described ; God at length favourably heard him.

His fervour daily increasing, insomuch that he

was wholly absorbed in God, Jesus Christ appeared to him as if attached to the cross. His soul, at this stupendous scene, was wholly penetrated, and, as it were, dissolved, and the image of his crucified Saviour became from that time so strongly and intimately imprinted on his heart, that every time it recurred to his mind, he had a difficulty in restraining his sobs and tears; this is what some, who were in his confidence, learnt from him towards the close of his life.

In this marvellous apparition he was made aware that these words of the Gospel were personally addressed to him: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." (8) He received from them that foretaste of poverty and humility which became his characteristics, and so ardent a charity inflamed his heart, that he had the courage to devote himself to the service of the lepers. Before this they were so much his horror, that far from allowing them to be in his presence, as soon as he saw them, at whatever distance, he turned away from them, and if they were near he passed on quickly, holding his nose. But for the love of Jesus crucified, who was pleased to represent Himself to the prophet Isaias (9) under the despised figure of a leper, he lowered himself to attending upon them in their hospitals, where, having abundantly supplied them with alms, he made their beds, dressed their sores, and performed for them the most

(8) Math. xvi. 24. (9) Isaias liii. 4.

abject services; he often even kissed their hands and their faces with great feelings of commiseration. The words which our Saviour one day addressed to him while at prayer, stimulated him to continue this charitable exercise, notwithstanding his natural repugnance: "Francis, if thou desirest to know My will, thou must despise and hate all that thou hast loved and wished for till now. Let not this new path alarm thee, for if the things which now please thee must become bitter and distasteful, those which now displease thee, will become sweet and agreeable." Shortly before his death he declared that what had seemed to him most bitter in serving the lepers, had been changed into what was pleasing both for soul and body; and all those who strive to overcome themselves for the love of God feel, as he did, that the severest practices are soon softened down by the unction of grace.

The sight of Jesus Christ fastened to the cross made him feel the misery of the poor so intensely that he would have wished to employ all he had, and his own person, in their relief. Sometimes he did strip himself to clothe them, and when he had not enough to satisfy them all, he unsewed or tore his clothes to divide among them. In the absence of his father he caused much more bread to be brought to table at their meals than was necessary, and when his mother asked the reason, he said, "that it was in order to give more quickly to those who came to ask, for I cannot bear their complaints; they pierce my heart with grief." This pious mother saw with

pleasure the charity of her son; and far from endeavouring to check it, she was not displeased at his leaving her alone at table, while he took to the neighbouring sick the viands of which he stinted himself. An equally lively and respectful zeal induced him to come to the aid of such priests as were in want; he took particular care to provide for the decoration of the altars, in order the better to assist at the divine service. He bought the finest linen, and distributed it to the poor country churches to be employed at the sacrifice of the mass; and when this august sacrifice was about to be celebrated, if anything was wanting, or if the altar was not properly found in everything requisite, he would offer himself to the officers of the church, in order to supply what was required either from his purse or by his personal assistance.

But all these good works did not come up to what he had figured to himself as requisite for perfection. He could have wished to withdraw into some distant country, there to practise voluntary poverty, which had already inflamed his heart. At first he resolved to go to Rome, to visit the tomb of St. Peter, by that movement of devotion which God has often inspired to His saints, and which has been so frequent from the fourth century. He also proposed to himself to solicit from the Almighty, by the intercession of the Prince of the Apostles, the grace to carry out the resolution he had come to of leading an Apostolic life. After having put up his prayer in this holy place, he noticed that in the crowd

of people some made but a slender offering, while others made no donation whatever. "What then," said he, "is devotion grown so cold? How is it, that men do not offer all they have, and do not even offer themselves on a spot where the ashes of the Prince of the Apostles reposed? How does it happen that they do not decorate with all possible magnificence this Peter, on which Jesus Christ has founded His Church?" He contributed to the best of his power, leaving a considerable sum for that purpose; and what he had wished was subsequently executed. The Sovereign Pontiffs, and in particular Sixtus V., who was a religious of his order, have rendered the Basilica of St. Peter so sumptuous and magnificent, that it is become the admiration of the universe.

On going out of the church, he saw a multitude of poor, whom he immediately joined, as much for the affection he had for them, as for the love of poverty. He gave his clothes to him who appeared the most necessitous, and took his rags himself, and he remained the rest of the day in their company, with extraordinary satisfaction to himself; and thus he trod under foot the pride of life, and raised himself up by degrees to evangelical perfection. The following day, having dressed himself with propriety, he set out on his return to Assisi, praying God to guide him in the ways of holy poverty.

The devil, who was sensible that the young man would become confirmed in his intention if

he persevered in prayer, appeared to him under a most terrific form, and threatened him, if he persisted, to render him a dreadful deformity like unto an old woman of the town, who was so hideous that he would not even look at her. But the newly enlisted soldier of Jesus Christ, who began to be inured to warfare, laughed at the threats of the tempter, and was more urgent in his prayers, for which purpose he chose underground places, where he could better defend himself against the snares of his enemy. The fruit of these holy exercises, was a lively sorrow for the use he had made of the first years of his youth, and a great perseverance in the mortification of his senses, in order to bear the cross of Jesus Christ in his body, as he bore it in his heart, and to consecrate himself wholly to God. Assiduity in prayer, joined to the practice of mortifications, are two excellent means for advancement in virtue and arriving at a state of sanctity.

It was thus that Francis acted before having changed his habit, or quitted the world. St. Bonaventure says, that he had then no other master from whom he received instructions than Jesus Christ; nevertheless, an author quoted by Wading, assures us that he sometimes consulted the bishop of Assisi. We may here say, in order that there may be no seeming contradiction between the two, that he received instructions from Jesus Christ only because he was inspired by Him, but that he communicated with the Bishop on the points on which he had been

inspired; and we may be the more assured of this, as we shall see hereafter that this prelate had his confidence, and that there is reason to think that he was his spiritual Father.

The servant of God, walking and meditating one day out of Assisi, near the church of St. Damian, which was very old and falling into ruin, was moved by the Holy Spirit to enter it to pray. There, prostrated before the crucifix, he repeated three times the following beautiful words, which gave him great interior consolation, and which he subsequently made frequent use of: "Great God, full of glory, and Thou my Lord Jesus Christ. I entreat you to enlighten me and to dispel the darkness of my mind, to give me a pure faith, a firm hope, and an ardent charity. Let me have a perfect knowledge of Thee, O God, so that I may in all things be guided by Thy light, and act in conformity to Thy will." He cast his eyes, filled with tears, upon the crucifix, when a voice came forth from it, and he heard distinctly these words repeated three times, not interiorly, but loudly pronounced: "Francis, go and repair my house, which thou seest is falling into ruin." So wonderful a voice, in a place where he was alone, alarmed him greatly, but he felt immediately the salutary effects of it, and he was transported with joy.

The sense of these words chiefly related to the state of the Church which Jesus Christ had purchased at the price of His blood, which the holy man was to repair in all its defects by his ministry and the labours of his disciples, accord-

ing to the explanation which the holy Spirit gave to him of them subsequently, which he communicated to his brethren, as St. Bonaventure tells us.

Nevertheless the powerful protection which he received from heaven for the repair of the church of St. Damian, was an indication that the same words were to be understood to relate to that building also: as the sacred oracles had a twofold literal sense in the mouths of the prophets, one of which related to events which were at hand, and the other to a distant time, and to mysteries wholly spiritual.

Francis came to himself; he left the church fully resolved to undertake its repair, and left money in the hands of a priest named Peter, who did the parochial duties of it, to keep a lamp burning before the crucifix, promising to give more, and to employ all he had for the use of this holy place.

The voice which had issued from the crucifix renewed in his mind and heart the impression of the mystery of the Passion. He felt himself interiorly wounded through the wounds of Jesus Christ, and he shed such burning tears, that his eyes were quite inflamed, and, as it were, full of blood, when he returned from prayer. To make his body participate in the sufferings which penetrated his very soul, and to punish himself for the levities of his youth, he imposed on himself a very rigorous abstinence, with various other descriptions of mortification.

The eagerness he felt to commence the repair of St. Damian's church, suggested to him means

by which the work might be begun. After having fortified himself by the sign of the cross, he took from his father's stores several pieces of cloth, which he sold at Foligno, together with his horse. He came back on foot, and offered the money respectfully to the priest of St. Damian for the repair of the church, and in aid of the poor; humbly entreating him to allow him to remain some time with him. The priest consented to receive Francis, but refused the money, fearing the displeasure of his father; and Francis, who had utter contempt for money, not valuing it more than so much dust, when it was of no use for good works, threw it upon one of the windows of the church. (10)

The heretics of the last century, who calumniated the Saint for many things, have deemed it criminal in him to have taken these pieces of cloth from his father's stores. St. Bonaventure is of a different way of thinking; he has not thought that this action required justification; on the contrary, he calls the sale of the cloth and of the horse a fortunate bargain. And, indeed, without going into the right which the son may have had in the commercial affairs of his father, in consequence of their partnership, and of his age of twenty-five, had he not reason to think that having received orders from heaven to repair a church, God, who is the Master and dispenser of all goods, permitted him to employ a proportion of those which were under his pa-

(10) This church is still extant; and they show the window into which the money was thrown. Wading. App. § 5.

ternal roof, since he had no other means of obeying the injunction? But it is an extraordinary case, which must not be drawn into precedent. The general rule of Christian morality is that children may not dispose of anything without the permission of their parents even under the pretext of piety.*

Bernardo on his return from a journey, having heard what his son had done, came in great wrath to St. Damian's with several members of his family; and Francis, who had not yet sufficient strength of mind to encounter the storm, and wished to avoid the first ebullition, went and

* The conduct of the Saint on this occasion may seem at first sight opposed to the ordinary rules of right and wrong; for how could he, it may be objected, in justice dispose of property which did not belong to him? However, the blessing which rested upon the action, and the testimony which God has since borne to the sanctity of His servant, oblige us to enquire whether he may not have acted in obedience to some higher rule, namely, to the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is certainly quite contrary to the ordinary law of justice for one man to take for himself the property of another; but if Almighty God, to whom all things ultimately belong, and for whom we are only stewards, is pleased to dispense with this His own law in a particular case, and to bestow what He has hitherto given to one upon another, He confers at the same time a valid title to the gift, and it is no robbery in him who has received it to act upon that title.

We but apply to the Saint the same principle which is used to exculpate the seeming injustice of the Israelites in spoiling the Egyptians, the sacrifice of Isaac, and the indiscriminate slaughter of the Chanaanites. The event justifies or condemns the act in the eyes of the world at large; while for those who feel impelled to actions opposed to ordinary laws, there are rules laid down in ascetical theology by which they may discern whether their impulse is a movement of the Holy Spirit, or a delusion of the evil one.

Perhaps the anecdote in the text may also be explained on the supposition that St. Francis was in partnership with his father, as is suggested in the text, and therefore had a right to a portion of his property.—[*Orat. Edit.*]

hid himself in the priest's room. Three contemporary authors assure us, that having placed himself behind the door, and pressing himself against the wall, when the door was opened he was miraculously (11) let into the wall, so that he was not seen by those who were looking for him.

When his father was gone, he retired secretly into a cavern, which was known only to one servant, from whom he received what was necessary for his immediate sustenance, and where he occupied himself in continual prayer, shedding abundance of tears, in order that he might be delivered from those who pursued him, and be able to accomplish the work which God had inspired him to undertake.

After having passed a month in this place, he considered that it was in God alone that he ought to hope, without putting any confidence in his own exertions, and this thought filled him with interior joy, and raised his depressed spirits. Reproaching himself, therefore, with his pusillanimity, he left his cavern and went straight to the town, as a soldier, who, feeling ashamed of having fled, returns intrepidly to the charge. Of what is not he capable, who is fully persuaded that he can do nothing of himself towards his salvation, but that he can do all through Him who imparts strength to him? On these two principles the saints have undertaken, and carried into execution, the greatest things.

(11) This wall was preserved, when a convent of his order was built in the same place in his life-time, and the hollow place is seen in it. Wading.

The inhabitants of Assisi, who saw his face all pale and wan, and who remarked how changed were his conversation and opinions, thought that his mind was disturbed. He was called a madman, they threw mud and stones at him, and followed him, hooting and calling after him. But without paying attention to these insults, and being on the contrary well pleased to bear these marks of the holy folly of the cross, the servant of God continued his way as if he had been deaf and insensible.

Bernardo being told that his son had returned, and was made the object of public derision, went immediately in pursuit of him, reproached him bitterly with his conduct, seized him and dragged him to his house, where he beat him severely, and confined him in a hole under the staircase. (12) This severity had no effect in shaking the resolution of the holy prisoner, he even acquired more firmness and encouraged himself to suffer by the words of the Gospel: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (13)

A short time after, when his father was on a journey, his mother, who did not approve of the severity with which he was treated, and who moreover had no hope of overcoming his constancy, set him at liberty. He gave thanks to God for it, and made use of it, to return to the

(12) This sort of prison is still seen. It was preserved in 1615, when the house was turned into a church and convent, at the request of Philip the third, king of Spain. Wading. App. § 3.

(13) Math. v. 10.

church of St. Damian. Bernardo, not finding him in confinement at his return, was not content with upbraiding his wife in the severest terms, but went off to St. Damian's to drive him out of the country if he should not succeed in bringing him back. Francis, to whom God had given strength, presented himself boldly to his father, and told him decidedly that he cared not for his blows, nor for his shackles, for that he was prepared willingly to suffer all sorts of evils for the name of Jesus Christ. His father, seeing that there was nothing more to hope in his case, thought of nothing further than to get back the money for the cloth and the horse, and he found the whole in the window where Francis had thrown it, when the priest refused to take it; and then his wrath was somewhat appeased.

Avarice, which is never satisfied, induced Bernardo to believe that his son had other money, and he had him summoned before the city magistrates, to account for it. Francis appeared before their tribunal and told them that he had changed his state of life, that God had delivered him from the slavery of the world, and that he had nothing more to do with its affairs. The magistrates, who knew his conversion and his perseverance, saw something grand in his demeanor, and told his father, who urged them to put interrogatories to his son, that this affair ought to be carried into the bishop's court. Bernard addressed himself to that authority, not only to compel his son to give up what money he had, but to force him to renounce his claims to any

paternal inheritance. Francis, who was a sincere lover of poverty, cheerfully consented to all that was required of him, and said that he would willingly appear before the bishop, who was the pastor and father of his soul. As soon as he was there, without waiting for his father to make his demand, and without saying anything himself, he gave up what money he still had, and then stripped off his clothes, even to his shirt, under which it was seen that he wore a hair-shirt, and gave them up to his father, addressing him in the following beautiful words: "Until this time I have called thee father on earth; but from henceforward I may boldly say, Our Father who art in Heaven, in whom I have placed all my treasure, and all my confidence."

The prelate, who was a man of great worth, admiring this excess of fervour, and moved even to tears, rose up, and embracing the servant of God, covered him with his cloak, and ordered his servants to bring such clothing as was necessary for him. It was no doubt by a dispensation of Divine Providence that a bishop pressed to his bosom him who was to combat so strenuously for the service of the Church. They brought an old cloak belonging to a labourer, who was in the employ of the bishop, which Francis received with great satisfaction, and with which he clothed himself, making on it a cross with some mortar which he met with accidentally; thus manifesting what he wished to be, a half-naked poor one, and a crucified man. This occurred in the year 1206, when he was in his

twenty-fifth year. St. Bonaventure, who gives the name of spiritual intoxication to the admirable fervour with which he stripped himself entirely in order to be able to follow Jesus Christ naked on the cross, says that moreover, in order to avoid the shipwrecks of the world, he fortified himself with the representation of the wood which was the instrument of our salvation.

Emancipated from the ties of worldly desires, as he had wished to be, he now sought for some sequestered spot, where alone and in silence he might listen to the voice of God. In a wood, through which he was passing singing the praises of God in the French language, some thieves surrounded him and asked him who he was. "I am the herald of the great King," he replied, in a prophetical sense, with perfect confidence in God. On receiving this answer, they beat him cruelly, threw him into a hole that was full of snow, and ridiculed the title he gave himself. When they had left him, he again began to sing the praises of God in a louder voice than before, delighted to have had an opportunity of suffering. At a neighbouring monastery, where he implored alms, which he received as a contemptible beggar, they employed him for some days in the vilest affairs of the scullery. But seeing that this interfered too much with his spiritual exercises, he came to Gubbio, where one of his friends having recognised him, gave him, in order that he might be more decently clad, a hermit's dress, (14) a short tunic, a leathern girdle, shoes, and a staff.

(14) Three centuries later, some persons pretended that he then

In this penitential habit, he subjected his body to additional austerities; and in order to fulfil all the functions of humility, to which he was much attached, he devoted himself to the service of the lepers. He was constantly seen in their hospitals, moving about in all directions to aid them, preventing all their wants, showing the greatest compassion for them, washing their feet, cleansing their sores, removing the matter, and by a wonderful effort of charity, kissing their disgusting ulcers. He received from God in reward the gift of healing; and this was a figure of the evangelical cures, which he was soon to apply to the diseases of the soul.

Among many proofs which St. Bonaventure adduces of his having the gift of healing miraculously, he mentions that of a man of the Duchy of Spoleto, whose mouth and cheeks were eaten away by a dreadful cancer, and for whom all sorts of remedies had been fruitlessly employed; this man met Francis returning from Rome, (whither he had been to implore the assistance of the blessed Apostles,) who, out of great respect, wished to kiss his feet; this the humble Francis prevented, but kissed the cancerous face, which was instantaneously cured. The same Saint remarks: "I know not which is most to be admired, such a kiss, or such a cure!"

The servant of God, who now acknowledged

adopted, not a hermit's dress, but that of the Augustinians, from the hands of a religious of that order, and that he had made profession of that rule. Wading has proved unanswerably, that this opinion is incorrect, and it has been given up.

no other country than heaven, and who was fearful of being the cause of some of his father's violences, proposed to himself to take up his abode in Gubbio and devote himself to the exercises of charity, without returning to Assisi; but calling to mind the order which had been given him by the voice which came from the crucifix, to repair the church of St. Damian, he thought himself bound to obey it, at least by "questing" for what was requisite for working at it. The profound humility which he had acquired by the degradations he had subjected himself to, gave him the courage he required for begging in his native town, where he had been known to have possessed everything in plenty. Having cast aside all bashfulness for the love of Jesus Christ poor and crucified, he went through the centre of Assisi as one inspired, publishing the glories of God, and soliciting stones for the repair of the church; addressing his fellow citizens with simplicity, thus: "Whosoever will give me a stone, shall have a reward; whoever will give two shall have a double reward; and he who gives three shall be rewarded threefold."

Many treated him with contempt, and turned him into ridicule. Others could not understand, how a young man of a good and opulent family, with excellent prospects, hitherto considered as the model of the young men of the place, could demean himself to such a degree as to beg in his native town. Some thought that such a

change could only come from God, and were greatly moved by it. But the new-made pauper, having no respect for the opinions of men, and receiving cheerfully the insults put upon him, after the example of Jesus Christ, thought of nothing but the church of St. Damian, for which he quested so successfully, that many persons, moved by his exhortations, furnished sufficient for its repair. He himself worked at it daily, and carried the materials on his shoulders as a common labourer, without any regard for his body, which was emaciated by the rigours of penance and fasting.

The priest of St. Damian took compassion on the pious workman, and took care to provide him with a substantial meal when he came in from work. Francis having received this charitable succour for some days running, reflected on his situation, and said to himself, as he afterwards told his disciples: "Will you find everywhere a priest who has so much consideration for you? This is not the sort of life you have chosen: go, then, henceforward from door to door, as a poor man, and solicit food for the love of God, with an empty plate, on which you will put whatever may be given you. For it is thus you must live for the love of Him who was born poor, who lived poorly, whom they affixed naked to the cross, and who was put after His death into another man's tomb." One must be very dead to self, have great contempt of the world, and a sincere love of God, to entertain such feelings and carry them out.

The following day he took a plate, and went begging from door to door, and sat down in the street to eat. At the first mouthful he took of this disgusting mess, he felt a nausea at his stomach, which made him recoil. Animated at the same instant by the love of poverty, he became ashamed of his weakness, and reproached himself for the feeling; after which, he ate the remainder without reluctance, and with so much relish, that he thought he had never eaten a better meal. He also felt an interior joy and strength in his body, which enabled him to bear with pleasure for God's sake, whatever might be most severe or bitter. After having returned fervent thanks to the Father of the poor, who had given him so wonderful a taste, he went to the priest and entreated him to take no further trouble with respect to his nourishment, "because," he said, "I have found an excellent purveyor, and a very able cook, who can season his dishes in a superior way." He had often these jocose expressions, which were as much the effect of the spiritual joy he felt, as of his natural lively and joyous turn of mind.

Bernardo, vexed in the greatest degree at seeing his son begging and exposed to the jeers of the public, was inflamed with anger, and either turned from him when he met him or cursed him. Francis admitted that these curses affected him more than any other suffering he endured, and he hit upon a method for protecting himself from them. It was to take another poor and miserable man with him, who should be as fa-

ther to him, whom he engaged to bless him, making the sign of the cross on him, whenever his father cursed him; and then he said to Bernardo: "Believe me, my father, that God can give me, and indeed has given me, another father, from whom I receive blessings for your curses.

His brother Angelo, a young man full of the love of the world, also mocked him, and turned him into ridicule. Seeing him one day in church shivering with cold in his poor hermit's dress, and praying devoutly, he said to one of his friends: "Go and ask him to sell you a little of his sweat?" Francis replied, "I do not choose to sell my sweat to men, I can sell it at a better price to God." If all Christians thought thus, they would not take so much pains for the world, which pays so ill, and they would do much for God, who rewards so magnificently.

The pauper of Jesus Christ gained many other victories over himself in the quest he had taken upon himself for the building of St. Damian. He suffered with admirable patience the persecution of some worldly persons, who treated him as a fool, and insulted him in a thousand ways. Every time that it happened to him to blush when he met any of his acquaintance or friends, he reprimanded himself as if he had committed some great fault; he humbled himself the more, and begged for alms more submissively to take down all influence of pride. One day when he was begging for oil for two lamps which he wished to keep constantly burning before the crucifix, from which the miraculous voice had

been heard, he went into a house where some persons of his aquaintance were collected together for gaming. Their sight struck him, and gave him a feeling of shame which induced him to retire. He had scarcely left the door, when, thinking on what he had done, he considered himself guilty of a great want of firmness, and he immediately returned to the place where they were at play, he acknowledged his fault before all present, and begged boldly for the lamps of the church in the French language, which set the company into an immoderate fit of laughter. Such efforts show the truth of the remark of St. Ambrose: That the saints were no less liable than ourselves to fall into faults; but that they had greater care to practise virtue, and to correct the faults into which they fall. (15)

Pious and well-thinking persons remarked, that the conduct of Francis was maintained with an equality of fervour, and they found a high degree of wisdom, in what appeared to the generality of the world to be littleness of mind and folly. These opinions gradually spread and brought over many to esteem and venerate him, even those who had despised and insulted him, came forward to solicit his forgiveness. The prior of the monastery where he had served in the kitchen, who was then at Assisi, and who there became acquainted with his rare virtues, showed him great respect, begged him to pardon the treatment he had received, and excused himself, by

(15) Lib. de Joseph. Patriarch. cap. 1, n. 4.

saying, that he could not then be known under the miserable disguise under which he had hid himself. The man who had foretold that he would do great things, added to his prediction, while applauding himself: "You know what I before said to you of this young man; you only see the beginning of his holiness, but you will see the continuation: Jesus Christ will do wonders through him, which all the world will admire."

The dispositions which were now entertained in his regard, procured for him the means of completing the repairs of St. Damian towards the close of the year 1206. In the course of this work, it was remarked that he said to those who passed by, "Assist me in finishing this building; there will be a monastery here some day of poor females of holy life, whose reputation will tend to glorify our heavenly Father throughout His holy Church." This was a real prophecy, the accomplishment of which was witnessed five years afterwards, when he established the holy virgin Clare and her companions, whom he had consecrated to Jesus Christ, as will be recorded in its place; and this prophecy was so well known, that Saint Clare inserted its very words in the will she made in the year 1253. (16)

At the beginning of the year 1207, Francis, not to remain idle, undertook a new work. He proposed to restore the church of St. Peter, which was at a little distance from the town, in con-

(16) This Will is given at full length by Wading, in the Annals of the Friars Minor, in the year 1255.

sequence of the devotion with which the purity of his faith inspired him towards the Prince of the Apostles; and this intention was soon put in force, because it having been seen how usefully he had made use of the donations he had received for his first work, he was now furnished with what he required more readily, and more abundantly. He now was desirous of effecting some essential repairs to a third church, or chapel, about a mile from Assisi, which was very ancient, but so deserted and in such a state of ruin, that it only served as a refuge for herdsmen in bad weather: its name was St. Mary of the Angels, and Ottavio, Bishop of Assisi, thus describes its foundation:

"In the year of 352, a year after the appearance in the heavens of a luminous cross on the 7th of May, in broad day-light, over the city of Jerusalem, which extended from Mount Calvary to the Mountain of Olives, a cross which was more brilliant than the sun, as St. Cyril, then bishop of that city, and one of the eye-witnesses of the phenomenon, relates in his letter to the Emperor Constantius; four holy hermits came from Palestine into Italy, and obtained from Pope Liberius leave to remain in the valley of Spoleto, and settled themselves in the vicinity of Assisi, with the permission of the authorities of the town. There they built a chapel which was called St. Mary of Josaphat (17), because they placed in

(17) It is usually believed that the sepulchre of the B. Virgin was in the village of Gethsemani, at the part of Mount Olivet from whence the Valley of Josaphat extends to Jerusalem.

it a relic of the sepulchre of the Blessed Virgin, (18) and because the altar was consecrated by the title of her glorious Assumption. In the sixth century it was given to the religious of the Order of St. Benedict, who enlarged and strengthened it; and it was afterwards called St. Mary of the Angels." We shall soon explain the reason of this. It was also called Portiuncula, because of some portions of ground which the Benedictines of Mount Saubazo possessed in the vicinity.

The same author adds, that at the close of the twelfth century, pious persons were accustomed to visit this chapel, although it was deserted, and that the mother of St. Francis, after having implored the protection of the Blessed Virgin, had had this first child who was destined to repair the very place in which she had made her request. He laboured at it also, in consequence of his fervent devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and he had equal success to what he had for the other two churches.

We can easily understand that a man without any property, who was poor and a beggar, could not have accomplished these works without assistance from above; but St. Bonaventure finds in it a still further mystery. He says that divine Providence, who guided Francis in all his actions, pre-ordained things in such manner, that he re-

(18) Baronius thinks that the tomb of the B. Virgin was covered with the ruins of Jerusalem, when sacked by the Romans, and was found in the fifth century; but the hermits may have had a relic of the sepulchre from the first faithful.

paired three churches previous to instituting his three orders, in order that the material temples should be the types of the three spiritual edifices which he was to raise up; and that passing from what is perceptible to the senses, to what is only apparent to the mind, and rising gradually to what is still more elevated, he was enabled to give to the Church of Jesus Christ three descriptions of soldiery able to combat for the reformation of morals, and worthy to triumph gloriously in heaven. We may add, that the austerities, labours, and humiliations of the servant of God, had been for the two previous years as so many strokes of the hammer, which rendered him a chosen and living foundation-stone on which might be based these sacred edifices. Such is the method which is adopted by our Lord; He prepares all things, and brings them successively to perfection; instead of which, men are always hurried, and often endeavour in the way to perfection to advance faster than the grace which directs them.

Of the three churches which Francis had repaired, he chose that of St. Mary of the Angels for his residence, in order to honour the Mother of God and the celestial Intelligences. St. Bonaventure says that he was often favoured by visits from angels, on account of the frequent apparitions of these blessed spirits there. The man of God passed days and nights there in fervent prayer, when he entreated the Blessed Virgin, that, as she had conceived and brought forth the Word of the Father, full of grace and truth,

she would have the goodness to obtain for him a participation therein; it was there also, that by the merits of this powerful advocate, he had the happiness to conceive and bring forth, if it may be so expressed, his evangelical life; the precious fruit of grace and truth, which the Son of God had come to bring upon earth.

One day when he was assisting in this church at a mass of the Apostles, which he had requested the priest of St. Damian to say, he listened attentively to the Gospel (19) where this form of life is prescribed by our Saviour for the mission of His Apostles: "Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff." (20) After mass, he asked the priest to explain these words to him; he understood the sense of them well, and impressed them well on his heart, finding in them the image of that poverty which he loved; "This is what I seek for," he exclaimed, quite overjoyed, "this is what I desire with my whole heart." At the same instant he threw away his purse with a feeling of horror for money, he took off his shoes, he replaced his leather girdle by a cord, and devoted his thoughts to putting in practice what he had just heard, and to conforming himself in all things to the evangelical rule. It is a vocation similar to that

(19) This Gospel is not now read either at the feasts of the Apostles or Evangelists, nor at their votive masses; it is only read on the Thursday of the Octave of Pentecost, which shows that the Gospels have been differently placed in the Missals.

(20) Math. x. 9, and 10.

of St. Anthony, of whom St. Athanasius relates, that having heard in the church these words of Jesus Christ, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor," (21) he went immediately to put this counsel in practice, in order to attain perfection.

The hermit's tunic, which Francis still retained, appeared to him too delicate; he therefore got one coarse and rough, of an ash grey, which came down to the feet, and the sleeves of which reached to the fingers; to this he added a hood, which covered sufficiently the head and face. This description of dress he continued to wear during the remainder of his life, (22) except that the tunic and hood had sometimes more or less length and breadth, as is seen in his habits which are preserved with great veneration at Assisi, at Mount Alvernia, and at Florence. Seeking nothing but poverty and humility, he chose the dress that was the plainest, the most despicable, and the most likely to make himself despised by the world, whose vanities he held in utter contempt; it was also the dress most like to that of the shepherds, and other country

(21) Sanct. Athan. tom. 1, part 2, p. 796, Ed. nov. Math. xix. 21.

(22) It is similar to the one which he gave subsequently to his religious, and which is still retained in his order. At the general chapter held at Narbonne in 1260, St. Bonaventure thought proper to add to the hood sufficient material to cover the breast and shoulders; this is called Mozetta from the Italian, which is used for a small cloak for bishops. Some of the children of St. Francis do not wear it, and differ from the others in some points; but all those who call him Father need have no difficulty on this head. It is by their poverty and humility that he will acknowledge them for his true children.

peasants, who chose it to protect them from the weather; or rather he imitated the prophets, who only covered themselves with a sack, to which he afterwards added a short cloak.

What we have been speaking of happened in the year 1208, which is reckoned the first year of the Order of St. Francis, because it is the one in which he took the habit, which he gave in the following year to such as chose to imitate him, and in which the first stone was laid which served as a foundation for this spiritual edifice.

Then God inspired him to preach, to exhort sinners to repentance, and to cause evangelical perfection to be loved in the world. Although he expressed himself in a very plain manner, his discourses had nothing in them that was low; they were solid and animated with the Spirit of God, and so effectually penetrated the hearts of his hearers, that every one was surprised at it. He always began them by the following salutation, which he afterwards declared had been revealed to him by God; "May the Lord grant you His peace." It was noticed that a very pious man, who was in the habit of addressing the two following words to all whom he met, "Peace and weal,—Peace and weal!" was not seen in Assisi after Francis began to preach; as if he wished it to be understood that his mission had ended by the presence of him whose precursor he was. In fact, this new preacher was in truth an angel of peace sent from heaven to reconcile a great number of sinners with Jesus Christ, and to draw down upon them all sorts of benefits.

He joined to the ministry of the word the exercise of every sort of virtue, and applied himself particularly to prayer, where the sufferings of our Blessed Saviour made such impression on his soul that he groaned and sobbed aloud, when he found himself at liberty. One of his friends, passing by the church of St. Mary of the Angels, having heard him, went in, and seeing him bathed in tears, reproached him with it as of a weakness unbecoming in a man. "I weep for the Passion of my Lord Jesus Christ," answered Francis, "and I ought not to be ashamed of weeping openly before the whole world." This enviable emotion was in the heart of St. Augustin, when he said to his people: "The Passion of Jesus Christ, which the Church puts every year before us, moves and affects us as if we saw Him personally stretched on the cross; there are none but the impious who can be insensible to it.—— As for me I wish to lament with you in considering this affecting spectacle. This is the time in which to weep, to acknowledge ourselves criminals, and to pray for mercy. Which of us would have it in his power to shed a sufficiency of tears to equal the merit of so great and so worthy a subject of grief?"(23) Every Christian ought to blush, if he is wanting in these sentiments of gratitude and love.

The words and actions of Francis soon became noised abroad. Some became converted, and embraced the penitential course he preached.

(23) D. August. in Ps. xxi. Enarr, 2, n. 1.

Others formed the resolution of leaving all and joining him. The first was Bernard da Quintavalle, a rich and discreet man, of one of the best families in Assisi, who had great influence in the town, and guided it by his advice. This respectable man, as St. Bonaventure called him, considering the contempt with which Francis viewed all the things of this world, was desirous of ascertaining whether it was in truth an effect of sanctity, or of littleness of mind. He invited him, therefore, to supper and to sleep at his house, and had a bed prepared for him in his room. While he feigned to sleep soundly, he saw by the light of a lamp Francis get up, fall on his knees, melt into tears, his eyes raised to heaven, his arms crossed, pronounce slowly these words: "Deus meus et omnia,—My God, and my all," which he repeated during the whole night. So ardent and so tender an expression is quite convincing that he was then in an exalted state of contemplation, where interior communications made him sensible that the Lord was especially his God, and filled the whole soul. Happy he who can with truth say, "Deus meus et omnia." For this it is requisite that he should belong wholly interiorly to God, and that the world should be nothing to him.

Bernard did not interrupt Francis in his holy exercise, but filled with devotional feelings, he said to himself, "truly this is a man of God." After having put him to other proofs, he resolved to give all his goods to the poor and follow him, and he put this question to him; "If a man had

received from his master a certain portion for several years, and then wished no longer to make use of it, what do you think it would be best for him to do?" Francis said in answer, that he ought to return it to the master from whom he had received it. "It is I," replied Bernard, "who have received a great deal from God, and much more than I have deserved; I return it willingly into His hands, and place it at your disposal; for I mean to attach myself to you." At these words Francis, delighted to find that God began the accomplishment of his works by so worthy a personage: "Your intention," he said, "is one of great importance; you must consult God upon it, to learn from Him how you are to put it in execution. Early to-morrow morning we will ask the Curate of St. Nicholas, who is known to be a most worthy man to say a mass for us, and after having heard it, we will continue in prayer till the hour of Tierce." We see in this the mode of acting of one who has the spirit of God; he hurries nothing, he has recourse to prayer, and he makes use of the ordinary practices of the Church.

The following day they did what they had proposed; after which Francis, who had great devotion to the three Persons of the blessed Trinity, opened three times in their honour the book of the Gospels, (24) entreating the Almighty

(24) Some authors say that it was the curate who opened the book, and this seems to coincide with the great respect he had for priests.

to confirm by the testimony of their texts, Bernard's holy resolution. (25) At the first opening they found the following: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all thou hast, and give it to the poor."(26) At the second: "Take nothing for the journey."(27) At the third: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up the cross, and follow Me." (28) Then Francis, addressing himself to Bernard, said: "There is the life we must lead; the rule we must follow, you and I, and all those who shall desire to join us. Go thou and put in execution what thou hast just heard."

The new disciple, intimately convinced that his design came from God, sold, as fast as he could, all his effects, from which he got a considerable sum, which he had carried to the Square of St. George, and distributed it entirely among the poor, whom he could collect. Francis then gave him a habit similar to his own; he called him his eldest son, and was always tenderly attached to him; he was indeed a most holy man.

Peter of Catania, canon of the church of St. Ruffinus, the cathedral of Assissi, edified by the self-denial and charity of Bernard, was disposed to become a disciple of the same master,

(25) This mode, which he took to ascertain the will of God, was accompanied by all the conditions requisite, according to St. Thomas, to make it legitimate; and we cannot reasonably doubt that God inspired him to make use of it, as Ecclesiastical history shows us that He so inspired other saints.

(26) Math. xix. 21. (27) Mark vi. 8.

(28) Math. xiii. 24.

and received the penitential habit on the same day, which was the 16th of April. All three retired to a hut which had been deserted near to a rivulet called *Rivo Torto*, on account of its winding so very much.

Seven days after that, a very pious man called Giles, who was greatly looked up to in Assissi, on his return from the country, learnt what his two fellow-citizens had done, which had excited the admiration of the whole town, and felt an ardent wish to imitate them, and thus carry out an intention he had entertained of devoting himself to the service of God. He passed the following night in prayer, when he was inspired to offer himself to Francis, for whom he had already great esteem, on account of the extreme contempt of the world, and of himself, which was remarked in the whole of his conduct. In the morning he went to the church of St. George, whose festival it was, there to implore the saint's intercession, that he might find him whom he was seeking, of whose abode he was ignorant. Seeing out of the town three roads, without knowing which to take, he addressed the following prayer to God: "O Lord, most holy Father, I entreat Thee by Thy mercy, if I am to persevere in this holy vocation, so to guide my steps that I may arrive at the place where Thy servant lives whom I am seeking." He took one of the three roads as God inspired him; and as he walked full of his holy project, Francis, who was at prayer in a neighbouring wood, came out to meet him.

As soon as Giles saw him, he went to him,

and threw himself at his feet, and begged the favour of being received into his society. The holy man, who was at once satisfied of the faith and piety of the postulant, replied: "My brother, your request is that God would receive you as His servant and soldier. This is no small favour. It is, as if the emperor were to come to Assisi, and wish to make choice of a favourite; each one would say, 'I wish to God it may be me.' Thus it is that God has made choice of you." He assured him that his vocation came from heaven, and exhorted him to persevere. Then presenting him to Bertrand and Peter, he said: "Here is a good brother, whom God has sent us."(29) And when he was alone with them, he told them that that man would one day excel in sublime virtue.

After a slender meal, and a spiritual conference, Francis set out with his new postulant for Assisi, to procure what was requisite for clothing. On the way, a woman having asked charity of them, the saint turned to Giles, and with an angelic countenance, said: "My dear brother, let us give this poor woman the cloak you have on for the love of God." Giles gave it immediately, and it seemed to him that this alms ascended to heaven, which filled him with great joy. They begged at Assisi for some very coarse cloth, with which Francis clothed his third disciple, in the small hut where he instructed him in the religious exercises of a religious life with the other two.

(29) He was of the number of lay-brothers.

St. Bonaventure(30) bears witness in his Life of St. Francis, that the holy Father Giles (for it is thus he calls him) was a man full of God, and worthy by the excellence of his virtues, of undying remembrance, according to the testimony of this saintly patriarch ; that during a great number of years he had his mind ever raised to heaven, and that he had been often seen lifted up in ecstasy, and that he seemed to live a life more angelical than human. "I myself," he adds, "have seen him with my own eyes raised up in ecstasy." He, moreover, gave thanks to God for having permitted him to live at a time when he had an opportunity of seeing this most holy brother Giles, and converse with him. There is extant a collection of his axioms, which are of the highest wisdom, force, and unction.(31)

Francis did not permit his disciples long to enjoy the sweetness of a life of retirement. Having informed them that they were bound to go forth to instruct their neighbours by unstudied words and an edifying life, he sent Bernard and

(30) He wrote the Life of St. Francis in 1261, and he speaks in it of the B. Giles as of one defunct ; from which we assume that he died in 1260, as some writers assert, and not in 1262, as others have recorded ; unless we suppose that the holy doctor, who only published his work in 1263, at the general chapter held at Pisa, may then have added the article relative to this holy person, after the 23rd of April 1262, which was the time of his death.

(31) They are mentioned in his Life, written by the continuators of Bollandus for the 23rd of April. A translation of it would be very acceptable.

Peter into Emilia,(32) and set out himself with Giles for the March of Ancona.

These apostolic men preached everywhere the grandeur and goodness of God, the obligation of each one to love Him, to obey His love, and to do penance. When they wanted the necessaries of life, they rejoiced, as if it were a treasure that they had purchased at the price of all they had possessed. Some persons received them obligingly, and did them good offices; but the singularity of their dress, and the rigour of their mode of life, shocked most of those who saw them. They were even frequently insulted, covered with mud, dragged by their hood, and severely beaten: this they joyfully bore, judging from the interior profit which they derived from it, that it was greatly to their advantage.

Their virtue, nevertheless, caused them to be treated at times with respect, and honours were even rendered to them. This mortified them, Giles in particular, who only gloried in the mortifications which he suffered for Jesus Christ's sake, and could not bear to be so honoured, said to his father: "When men honour us, we lose our glory." He also expressed to him his dissatisfaction that the mode of greeting which he had taught them, "May the Lord grant you His peace," was ill received by the men of the world. "Pardon them," replied Francis, "for they know not what they do. I verily assure

(32) A Province which formed part of Lombardy and Romagna.

you that hereafter there will be many nobles and princes who will respect you and your brethren, when you shall address those words to them." He foretold to him likewise that his Institute would spread, and that it might aptly be compared to a net which a fisherman casts into the river, with which he catches a multitude of fish.

The pious missionaries having gone through several towns, and given great satisfaction, returned to the hut at Rivo Torto, when a fourth disciple offered himself; his name was Sabbatin.

Morique, a religious of the order of Crosiers, or cross-bearers,(33) was the fifth. Being sick, and in extremity, given over and abandoned by the medical men of the hospital of St. Saviour of Assisi, where all strangers were received, he got himself recommended to the prayers of Francis, who willingly prayed for him, and mixed a little crumb of bread with the oil of the lamp, which burnt before the altar of St. Mary of the Angels, which he sent him by two of his brethren, saying to them: "Take this to our dear brother Morique. The power of Jesus Christ will not only restore him to perfect health, but will cause him to become a generous soldier, who will enter into our militia, and will persevere in it." The sick man had hardly swallowed the remedy, but he was quite cured, and he soon

(33) It was of the congregation of Italy which Pope Alexander III. suppressed in 1666. The Order of the religious of the Holy Cross of which Clair Lieu near Hui, is the chief place, still exists in France and in the Low Countries.

after entered the Institute of his charitable physician, in which he lived in prodigious austerity during a long life, and enjoyed perfect health.

A sixth disciple, called John, and surnamed De Capella, began well, but finished ill. (34) He was employed to distribute to his brethren what was given to them in alms, and he took willingly the trouble of procuring for them what was wanted. But by little and little he got attached to temporal things, went too much abroad, and was very much relaxed from the regular discipline. The holy founder having frequently reprimanded him severely, and without effect, he threatened him for his contumacy with a severe illness and a miserable death. In fact, this unworthy religious was stricken with a horrible leprosy, which he had not patience to endure. He forsook the poor of Jesus Christ, his companions, and, letting himself fall into despair, he hanged himself, as Judas had done.

St. Antoninus remarks that the life of St. Francis was in conformity with that of Jesus Christ, even in the circumstance of having had an unworthy disciple.(35) He only became such by his depraved will; but God in His wisdom made him serve as an example to show that we

(34) This sirname was given him because he wore on his head a sort of hat or capulary not worn by the rest, which was called in Umbria Capella from the Latin capellus, in low Latin. The religious of abbeys wore a hood or capulary, according to the remark in Menage in his Etymological Dictionary.

(35) S. Anton. Chron. part. 3, tit. 24, cap. 7.

may be lost even in the most holy states of life if we cease to labour with fear and trembling for our salvation. Peter Rodulphus, bishop of Sinigaglia, in the Duchy of Urbino, adds, that the loss of one of the first children of St. Francis, and still more that of Judas in the Apostolic college, should induce those who are inclined to think ill and contemptibly of a whole order, on account of the ill-behaviour of some individual, to reform their method of forming their opinions. (36)

Among the instructions which Francis gave to his disciples, he laid great stress on poverty, the practice of which might appear to them to be very severe. In order to render them wise herein by experience, and to make them feel that their subsistence depended on the charity of the faithful, he took them all into Assisi, and made them beg from door to door. This voluntary mendicity, which seemed new, and which had hardly been seen till then, drew down upon them derision, contempt, rebuffs, and angry words. In one place they were treated as sluggards and idlers, and turned away with curses ; in another they were told they were fools to have given up their own property to go begging from other people. The parents and relatives of those who were thus begging, asserted that their families were dishonoured by these practices, and made loud complaints. There were however some who respected their poverty, and aided them with

(36) Rudolph. Hist. Script. Relig. lib. I. fol. 67.

good will. Such was the feeling of the public of those times in regard to evangelical poverty, which differs but little from what it is in our own days.

After this quest, Francis went to report to the bishop of Assisi the proceedings of his new soldiers. This worthy prelate, who greatly valued him, and gave him his support on all occasions, could not help telling him then, that he thought the sort of life he had chosen, in which they gave up all possessions whatsoever, hard and grievous: "As to me," replied the holy man, "I find it still harder and more grievous to possess anything; for one cannot take care of what one possesses without much solicitude and embarrassment. It gives rise to law-suits, which must be undertaken; sometimes people are obliged to take up arms to protect it; and all this extinguishes the love of God and of our neighbour." The bishop approved of his remarks, and once more promised him his protection. It is true that the state of voluntary poverty, in which a person possesses nothing whatever, has its inconveniences; and where does human corruption fail to find such? But it cannot be denied, that the state in question is very favourable to salvation, since it is based upon the counsel of Jesus Christ; and that, on the contrary, the possession of property is dangerous for salvation, since He Himself has said emphatically: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." (37)

(37) Luke xviii. 24.

While the evangelical poor continued at Rivo Torto, the emperor Otho IV., who was on his way to Rome with a great train, in order to be consecrated and crowned by Innocent III., (38) passed by their hut. (39) They were too mortified to pay any attention to the pomp of his retinue; but Francis ordered one of them to go to the emperor and tell him that all the glory which surrounded him would be but of short duration. The religious obeyed, and boldly told the emperor what he had been desired. The prediction displeased the prince, who nevertheless admitted from the event that it was well founded. (40) For, having violated his coronation oath, and committed various injustices towards the Church, he was excommunicated the following year by the same Pope; and afterwards deprived of his empire, and abandoned by the whole world. (41) It is thus that the greatness of the world, so fickle in itself, and always put an end to by death, falls sometimes even before that, by misconduct, and by the just judgments of God.

Zeal for the salvation of souls induced Francis to move his small troop into the Valley of Rieti. He halted at an abandoned hermitage on a large rock, which he thought to be a convenient place for entering into conversation with God, and where he came to pass the nights, after having

(38) The ceremony took place 27th Sept. 1209.

(39) Bernard. Cor. Hist. Mediolan. part 2. V. Bellov. Hist. lib. 30.

(40) Godef. Monac. ad ann. 1209.

(41) Chron. Foss. Nov. ad ann. 1211 and 1212.

been preaching and asking charity in the neighbourhood with the other six during the day, principally at Poggio Bastone, a town in the vicinity. (42)

Being at prayer one day on this rock, and ruminating in the bitterness of his soul on his past years, he was assured by a fresh inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that his sins were forgiven him, which filled him with joy. We cannot doubt but that his sins had been remitted him at the period of his conversion, by sincere contrition and the sacrament of penance. But in this happy moment he received the assurance thereof by revelation, and he learnt at the same time that the remission was entire, that is to say, that all the temporal punishment due to his sins had been remitted.

St. Bridget,(43) whose revelations are sanctioned and respected by the Church, relates that she learnt from our Saviour that when Francis retired from the world to enter on the way of perfection, he obtained from God a lively sorrow for his sins, which enabled him to say: "There is nothing on earth which I am not heartily willing to give up; nothing so laborious and so toilsome that I would not joyfully endure, nothing that I would not undertake, according to the strength of my body and soul for the glory of my Lord Jesus Christ; and I will, as far as is possible, excite and induce all others to love God with their whole hearts, and above all other things." Such

(42) In Latin, Oppidum Podii Bosconis.

(43) She was a princess of the blood royal of Sweden.

beautiful sentiments, well lived up to and exemplified by actions and conduct, would give us, not an entire assurance as to the remission of our sins, but a firm and well founded confidence thereof.

The holy penitent received with this plenary indulgence the grace of an ecstasy, wherein, by a bright illumination from on high, God communicated to him what was to occur to his order. When he returned to join his disciples: "Take courage, my dear children," he said, "rejoice in the Lord. Be not cast down at the smallness of your numbers. Let not my simplicity nor yours alarm you, for God has shown me clearly, that by His blessing He will spread this family of which He is the Father, into all parts of the world. I could wish to be silent on all that I have seen, but charity compels me to communicate it to you. I saw a great multitude coming to us to take a similar habit, and to lead the same life. I saw all the roads filled with men who walked hither, and hastened themselves very much. They came in great numbers, French, Spaniards, Germans, English, and from almost all nations. The noise of such as come and go, to execute the orders of holy obedience, still sounds in my ears."

So magnificent a prediction reminds us of the prophet Isaias on the establishment of the Church: "Jerusalem, thou who sayest—I am barren—lift up thine eyes and look all around thee. All this vast multitude surrenders itself up to thee. I see them coming from afar—some from the North,

others from the West, others from the land of the South; a thousand will come forth from the smallest among them, and from the very least a great people." (44)

The event has verified in the eyes of the universe, the prophecy of the holy Patriarch. There was in a very short time a great number of religious; his order extended itself to all parts with astonishing rapidity, and it has multiplied itself so wonderfully for more than five centuries, that it may be looked upon as a representation of the birth and progress of the Church.

The disciples, greatly comforted by what they had just heard, and persuaded that their master had the spirit of prophecy, entreated him to inform them what would in future be the situation of his order. He explained to them in parables the good which would be effected by it, and at the same time the relaxations which would be introduced into its discipline, in order that the graces of God, which were to be bestowed on it, might excite their utmost gratitude, and that the fear of their weakness and want of fervour might render them vigilant and humble.

The odour of sanctity which issued through the environs of the hermitage, and the holiness of their lives, brought many persons to them for instruction, and to profit from the edification they would receive. A very worthy person, whose name was Philip the Long, was desirous of entering the state of evangelical poverty. Francis made him his seventh disciple, and he brought

(44) Isaias cap. 49 and 60.

them all back to the hut at Rivo Torto. In this holy retreat he spoke to them frequently of the kingdom of God, of the contempt of the world, of renouncing of their own will, of the mortification of the senses, and other maxims of a spiritual life. He opened to them also his intention of sending them into the four parts of the world; for with the seven children which evangelical poverty and simplicity had given him, it was his wish to bring all the faithful to penance, and to generate them in some measure anew by the word of truth, to give them, or rather to restore them, to Jesus Christ. In fine, he told all his disciples openly, but with great humility, that the Divine Majesty had, in His wisdom, decided to employ them, and the companions they should aggregate to their community, to renew the face of the earth, by their preaching and their example, in order that the losses the Church had sustained by the corruption of morals, might be made good; and that it was for this purpose that grace had put it in their power so promptly to exercise the holy ministry. In order to prepare them for this mission, he made them the following discourse, which is worthy of being recorded at full length, in the words in which it has been preserved by his companions, to whom it was addressed :—

"Let us consider, my dear brethren, what our vocation is. It is not only for our own salvation that God has called us by His mercy, but it is for the salvation of many others. It is in order that we should exhort all the world, more by example than by words, to do penance and to keep the

Divine precepts. We are looked upon as senseless and contemptible, but let not this depress you; take courage, and be confident that our Lord, who conquered the world, will speak efficaciously through you. Let us be cautious, after having given up all, not to lose the kingdom of heaven for a trifling gain. If we find money any where, let us consider it as valueless as the dust which we tread under our feet. Let us not judge and despise the rich who live in luxury and wear the ornaments of vanity. God is their Lord, as He is ours; He may call them and justify them; we must honour them as our brethren, and as our masters. They are our brethren, because we have all the same Maker; and they are our masters, because they befriend the good by the assistance they afford them. Go then, and exhort men to do penance for the remission of their sins, and for peace. You will find some among the faithful mild and good, who will receive you with pleasure and willingly listen to you. Others, on the contrary, people without religion, proud and violent, will censure you, and be very hostile to you. But make up your minds to bear all this with humble patience, and let nothing alarm you. In a very short time many learned and noble persons will join themselves to you, to preach to kings, to princes, and to nations. Be therefore patient in tribulations, fervent in prayer, and fearless in labour. Be unassuming in speech, be grave in your manner, and grateful for the favours and benefits you may receive. The kingdom of God, which is eternal, will be your

reward. I entreat the one and only God, who lives and reigns in Three Persons, to grant it to us, as He doubtless will grant it to us, if we are faithful to fulfil all that we have voluntarily promised."

This discourse filled them with fresh ardour. They threw themselves at the feet of the holy man, and joyfully received the orders he gave them, in addressing to each one of them these words of the Psalmist, which he was accustomed to repeat when he gave those instructions which required obedience: "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee."(45) Having divided the routes they were to take by forming a cross which pointed to the four quarters of the globe, and knowing that he was to be the model for his brethren, he took one side for himself with a companion, and sent the other six, two and two, to the other sides.

Wherever they found a church, they prostrated and made use of this formula, which they had learnt from their Father: "We adore Thee, O most holy Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all Thy churches which are in the whole world, and we bless Thee for having redeemed the world by Thy holy cross." They had a great veneration for all chapels, for all crosses, and for all that had any relation to the worship of God. As soon as any one addressed them they wished him peace, and instructed him in the way to gain it. If any one appeared to them to have strayed from

(45) Ps. liv. 25.

the way of salvation, they endeavoured to bring him back in a mild and humble manner. In their sermons they spoke ingenuously whatever was inspired them by the Holy Ghost, pointed out the true way to heaven, showed what were the duties of charity, and endeavoured to bring all to love and fear the Creator and keep His holy commandments.

When they were asked from what country they came, and to what profession they belonged, they replied: "We are penitents come from Assisi;" for they would not as yet give the name of religion to their society. There were worthy people who received them with pleasure; but there were many others who disapproved of their habit, their institute, their discourses, imagining also that it was dangerous to give them house-room, and that alms ought not even to be given to them; so that these poor of Jesus Christ, cast off on all sides, had often to pass the nights under porticos.

Bernard and Giles went as far as Florence. A pious individual named Guy offered them some money, which they refused, and when it was wished to know from them, why, being so poor, they would not take it, they made this answer: "We have left all that we possessed, according to the evangelical counsel. We have voluntarily embraced poverty, and we have renounced the use of money." So perfect a detachment, joined to an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, and to sublime virtues, and particularly a patience full of meekness and charity in the midst of

insults and injurious treatment, caused them to be looked upon in the town as holy personages; they were consulted in cases of conscience, and dwellings were offered them.

While these Apostolic men continued their mission, Francis, guided by the Spirit of God, returned to the hut at Rivo Torto, where he received four additional disciples: Constantius, or John of St. Constantius; Barbarus; Bernard of Viridant, or Vigilantius; and Sylvester, who was a priest; he was the first in the order, and his vocation was marvellous, of which the following are the circumstances.

He had sold some stones to St. Francis for the church of St. Damian, and had received the payment of their value. When he saw him preside over the distribution of the property of Bernard de Quintavalla, he complained of having been injured in the sale of the stones, and demanded a compensation. The servant of God, who did not choose to have any dispute with him on the subject, taking a bag full of money, gave him hands-full, saying: "Take this for the payment you demand from me, but which I do not owe you." He offered him some a second time, but Sylvester would not take it, but left him well satisfied with what he had got. At night the injustice of what he had done occurred to him; he conceived a sincere sorrow for it, asked pardon of God, and promised to restore what he had extorted to the prejudice of the poor.

Nevertheless he formed his opinion of Francis

according to the ideas of the world, and he looked with disgust on his mode of life. God was pleased to will that he should be cured of this prejudice, which was dangerous for his salvation, and that he should surrender himself to the saint as one of his disciples, which was effected by means of a mysterious dream. During the night he saw a horrible dragon, which surrounded the town of Assisi, as if about to destroy it, together with the entire country. Francis immediately came forth, and from his mouth there came forth a golden cross, which reached up to heaven, and the arms of it extended to the extremities of the earth, and its splendour put the dragon to flight. Having had this dream three successive nights, he perceived in it something divine, and he went and related it to Francis, with the minutest exactness. This humble servant of Jesus Christ, far from having the least complacency at it, only made use of it to admire the goodness of God, who grants such favours, and to animate himself to combat the infernal dragon with renovated energy, and publish the glory of the cross of our Saviour. But Sylvester, profiting by the grace attached to the vision, was not satisfied with restoring what he had unjustly extorted; he resolved moreover to leave all that he possessed, to embrace poverty under the guidance of Francis, which his affairs did not permit him to carry into execution till the end of the year 1209. St. Bonaventure says, that an authentic proof of the truth of the vision, was the holiness of the life he led when in

the order. In fact, he undertook so sincerely to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, and made such vast progress in prayer, that according to the account of this blessed Father, he conversed with God in a manner nearly similar to what is written of Moses: "That the Lord spoke to him as a man is accustomed to speak to his friend." (46)

Francis, full of the tenderest feelings for his children, was desirous of having them all assembled together. He entreated the Lord, who had in former times congregated the people of Israel dispersed among the nations, to do him a similar favour in regard to his small family, and his prayer was heard. (47) The six who were out on missions returned to Assisi from various places, as if they had acted in concert, without having had any notice given them. The pleasure which their return gave him was greatly increased by the sincere and modest recital which they made him of all that had passed in their travels for the glory of God and the benefit of their neighbour. They gave an account, with evident joy, of the outrages and blows they had endured and suffered, pleased to have been found worthy to undergo those trials in the service of Jesus Christ. The last comers envied them, and were only consoled by the thought and hope, that a time would come when they would be employed in this holy warfare, and, should an opportunity be given them, of displaying equal courage; the

(46) Exod. xxxiii. 11. (47) Ps. cxlvi. 2.

seniors embraced the latter, and congratulated them on having chosen this holy estate of life: they all exhorted each other to perseverance.

Their common Father brought them up in the practice of the most rigorous penances, but with the utmost mildness and kindness. He did not impose upon them any considerable number of prayers, because he was not desirous of compelling devotion, and rather wished that these exercises of piety should be spontaneous. He only then prescribed to them to say daily, for each part of the Divine Office, the Lord's prayer three times, and to hear Mass, at which he desired they should employ themselves in meditating on the mystery. It is, in fact, the very best way of assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, and the faithful should be advised to practise it. But those are not to be censured who make use of vocal prayer during mass, provided they do so with attention and piety in the very spirit of the mystery; since there is nothing in that but what is good, and because, moreover, every one has not the talent of meditation.

The servant of God, considering that the number of his brethren increased, thought seriously of forming a Rule for them, and having assembled the eleven, the number they then were, he said to them: "I see, my dear brethren, that God, in His infinite goodness, proposes to extend our society; it is therefore necessary that we should prescribe for ourselves a Rule of Life, and go and give an account thereof to the most holy Roman Pontiff; for I am persuaded that in mat-

ters of faith, and in such as concern Religious Orders, nothing can be done which is pure and stable without His consent and approbation. (48) Let us then go and find our Mother the holy Roman Church. Let us make known to our holy Father the Pope, what God has deigned to begin through our ministry, in order that we may pursue our course according to his will, and under his orders."

A celebrated Bishop of France, said in an assembly of his Clergy :(49) "Paul having returned from the third heaven, came to see Peter, in order to give a form to all future ages, and that it be established for ever, that however learned or holy we may be, were any of us another St. Paul, we must see Peter." These sentiments are in entire accordance with those of St. Francis, and contain an important principle, from which it is easy to deduce the consequence.

All the disciples applauded the proposal of their master, declaring that they were ready to receive the rule that he would give them, and to go to Rome to solicit its confirmation. Francis betook himself to prayer, and composed (50) in a plain

(48) He spoke this in 1210, when there was no ecclesiastical law which obliged them to solicit this approbation. This was only required for all religious establishments by the fourth Lateran Council, in 1215, and it was renewed at the general Council of Lyons in 1274. Thus the sole motives of the Saint on this occasion, were the purity of his faith, and the inviolable attachment he bore to the Holy See.

(49) Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, in 1632, in his opening discourse to his clergy.

(50) A Flemish chronicle states that some of the most learned of his disciples worked at this with him. But the oldest writers of his Life assure us that it was his own composition enlightened by the

unadorned style, in twenty-three chapters, a Rule of Life, the immovable basis of which was the observance of the Gospel, to which he added some exercises which he considered necessary for the sake of uniformity. Besides the three vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, they renounced all possessions whatsoever, and they bound themselves to live on charity without ever receiving money. Clerks and laymen were alike admitted to embrace this Institute, under the name of Friars Minor. There were also some regulations relative to the Divine Office, prayer, the practice of virtue, fasts, the bareness of the feet, preaching, and the missions, which will be noticed when we come to speak of the second rule which the Patriarch gave in the year 1223, which they keep in his Order, and which is nothing more than an abridgment of the first. This last having been read and accepted, Francis with his brethren set out for Rome, to which, through humility, he chose that Bernard de Quintavalle should lead them.

They pursued their journey with great simplicity, only speaking of God and of things calculated for edification ; they often retired to some bye-place for the purpose of praying, without troubling themselves where they should pass the night ; and God raised up persons who received them hospitably. By an effect of His Providence they went out of their way to go to Rieti, where they remained two days. Francis met in one of

Holy Ghost ; and the second rule proves this decisively, as well as the testimony he gives of it himself in his will.

the streets an officer of the army, whose name was Angelo Tancred. (51) He was quite unknown to him, but nevertheless he accosted him by his name, and said: "Angelo, you have worn long enough your spurs, your sword, and your belt; it is time that you should have a thick cord instead of a belt; the Cross of Jesus Christ instead of a sword; and mud and dust instead of spurs. Follow me, therefore, and I will make you a soldier of Jesus Christ." At the very moment the officer quitted all things, followed Francis, took his poor habit, and became his twelfth disciple, who now by their number resembled the twelve Apostles, whose lives they revered. This wonderful conversion shows that God sometimes moves sinners, by His active and powerful grace; as when He said to Matthew, "Follow me," and Matthew followed Him.(52) But it must also make us reflect that in the ordinary course of things He invites to repentance by graces, the impressions of which upon the mind are not so active, and which have only progressive advances, each of which requires being faithfully responded to.

The holy Patriarch continued his route, placing his entire confidence in God; but the others became alarmed at their own simplicity; they were fearful that it would impede their design; but God removed their fears by a vision which their holy Father had. It seemed to him that he was walk-

(51) He relates himself the circumstances of his conversion in a work he composed on the actions of St. Francis in the Valley of Rieti.

(52) Math. ix. 10.

ing along a way where there was a very high tree. Coming near it, he went under it to admire it, when all on a sudden he felt himself raised up in the air by divine power, so that he had reached the top of the tree, and that from thence he easily made the tallest branches bend quite to the ground. The Holy Spirit pointed out to him that this was a presage of the favourable issue of his application to the Apostolic throne. This filled him with joy, and his recital of it to his brethren renovated their courage.

The bishop of Assisi, whom they found at Rome, received them with great kindness. The sight of them at first gave him some uneasiness, being apprehensive that it was their intention to leave his diocess, and that his people would be deprived of the examples of these holy men. But having learnt from them the motive of their journey, he promised them to use his influence in their favour, and gave them hopes of succeeding through the intervention of Cardinal John of St. Paul, bishop of Sabina, who was his intimate friend.

This prelate was of the Colonna family; he was the friend of the poor, and of all worthy persons; he was respected for his many eminent qualities, and had great authority at the Roman court. What the bishop of Assisi had already told him of Francis and his companions, of their holy life, and of the singularity of their institute, had excited in him a great wish to see them. As soon as he had heard of their arrival, he had them brought to his palace, received them with

great honour, and was so pleased with their conversation, that after having assured them of his favour, he begged them to consider him from thenceforward as one of themselves. And he declared himself their protector, and by his interference he soon procured for them the friendship of the principal persons in the sacred College, and particularly that of Cardinal Ugolini, nephew to the Pope, and subsequently Pope by the name of Gregory IX.

Francis, who was anxious to get his affairs expeditiously brought to a termination, got himself introduced to the Pope by an officer of his acquaintance. The Pope, who was walking at that moment in a place called the Mirror,(53) and being deeply engaged respecting some difficult affairs of the Church, would not so much as listen to him, but repulsed him rudely as a stranger of no very respectable appearance. The servant of God humbly withdrew; and it is recorded that he then restored to sight a blind man who had had his eyes torn out. The holy Father saw in his sleep a palm tree grow slowly at his feet and become a fine large tree.(54) Pleased with what he saw, but not understanding its meaning, he learnt by a divine inspiration that the palm tree represented the poor man whom he had ungraciously repulsed the day before. As soon as it was day, he gave directions

(53) It was so called because it was an elevated spot exposed to the sun, commanding a beautiful prospect.

(54) He himself relates this vision to Cardinal Ugolini, his nephew; this cardinal repeated it, and St. Bonaventure published it. Wading.

that the poor man should be sought for. He was found in the hospital of St. Anthony, and came to the feet of the Pope, and laid before him the rule of life he followed, with energetic though humble solicitations for his Holiness's approval thereof.

Innocent III., a Pontiff of great wisdom, acknowledged the candour and the admirable courage and zeal of the servant of God. He received him into his favour as one truly poor in Jesus Christ, and he was inclined to comply with his request; however he postponed doing so, because his mode of life appeared novel to some of the cardinals, and so much beyond what human strength could endure; the evil times, and the coldness of charity, making them think it very difficult and almost impossible for an order to subsist without possessing any effects whatever.

Cardinal John of St. Paul was indignant at these obstacles, and he expressed himself with great warmth to the other Cardinals in presence of the Pope. "If you reject the prayers of this poor man, on the pretence that his rule is novel, and too austere, let us take care that we do not reject the gospel itself; since the rule of which he solicits the approval, is in conformity with what the gospel teaches; for to say that evangelical perfection, or the vow to practise it, contains anything unreasonable and impossible, is to blaspheme against Jesus Christ, the author of the gospel." The Pope, struck with this reasoning, said to Francis: "My son, pray to Jesus Christ that He may make

known His will to us, that so we may favour your wishes." The servant of God retired to pray, and soon after returned and set forth this parable. (55)

"Most holy Father, there was a beautiful young girl, who was very poor, and who lived in a wilderness. The king of the country, who saw her, was so charmed with her beauty that he took her for his wife. He lived some years with her, and had children, who all resembled their father, and had nevertheless the beauty of their mother; he then came back to his court. The mother brought up her children with great care, and after some time said to them: My children, you are born of a great king, go and find him, tell him who you are, and he will give you all that is befitting your birth. As to myself, I will not leave this desert, and I even cannot. The children went to the king's court, who seeing their resemblance to himself, and that they had the beauty of their mother, received them with pleasure, and said to them: Yes, you are my true children, and I will support you as the children of a king, for if I have strangers in my pay, if I maintain my officers with what is served at my table, how much more care should I not have for my own children, the offspring of so beautiful a mother? As I love the mother extremely, I will keep the children she has had by me at my court, and I will feed them at my table.

"This king, most holy Father," continued Fran-

(55) Three of his companions report the parable at length; St. Bonaventure only gives an abridgment, but which contains the gist.

cis, "is our Lord Jesus Christ. This beautiful girl is poverty, which being everywhere despised and cast off, was found in this world as in a desert. The King of kings coming down from heaven, and coming upon earth, was so enamoured of her, that He married her in the manger. He has had several children by her in the desert of this world, Apostles, Anchorites, Cenobites, and many others, who have voluntarily embraced poverty. This good mother sent them to their Father with the marks of royal poverty, as well as of her humility and obedience. This great King received them kindly, promising to maintain them, and saying to them: I who cause my sun to shine on the just and on sinners, who give my table and my treasures to pagans and to heretics, food, clothing, and many other things, how much more willingly shall I give to you what is necessary for you, for you and all those who are born in the poverty of my much cherished Spouse.

"It is to this celestial King, most holy Father, that this Lady, His spouse, sends her children whom you see here, who are not of a lower condition than those who came long before them. They do not degenerate; they have the comeliness both of their Father and their mother, since they make profession of the most perfect poverty. There is, therefore, no fear of their dying of poverty, being the children and heirs of the immortal King, born of a poor mother, of the image of Jesus Christ by the virtue of the Holy Ghost; and being to be brought up in the spirit of poverty in a very poor order. If the King of heaven pro-

mises that such as imitate Him shall reign with Him eternally, with how much more confidence ought we not to believe that He will give them what He usually gives, and with so much liberality, to the good and to the bad."

The Pope listened very attentively to the parable and to its application. He was greatly pleased with it, and had no doubt but that Jesus Christ spoke by the mouth of Francis. He was also convinced by an interior light of the Holy Spirit, that in him a celestial vision which he had had some days before would be accomplished, and which, as St. Bonaventure informs us, he himself related. While he slept, he saw that the Lateran Church was on the point of falling, when a poor and miserable man supported it on his shoulders. On which he exclaimed: 'Yes truly, it is that man who will support the Church of Jesus Christ by his works and by his doctrine.' He thus foretold the great service Francis and his children would render to the universal Church, which indeed they have rendered, and for the last six centuries, have not ceased to render; this was what was prefigured by the vision; although it has been remarked as something very singular, that the Lateran Church has been repaired, improved, and ornamented by three Popes, the children of the blessed Patriarch, to wit, Nicholas IV., Sixtus IV., and Sixtus V.

Innocent III., moved and greatly affected by these celestial portents, conceived for Francis a most tender friendship, which he preserved ever after. He approved his rule verbally, granted

him several other favours, and promised many more. After having received in his own hands the profession of the founder, and of those who accompanied him, he directed him to preach penance in all parts, and to labour for the extension of the Catholic faith. In order to enable them to employ themselves more freely in preaching, and to assist the priests with greater dignity in the performance of the holy mysteries, he directed that the lay brethren who were then with them, should receive the Tonsure, and wear small crowns ; (56) he even conferred minor orders on them, and deacon's orders on Francis, whom he constituted Superior General of all the Religious of the order of Friars Minor, present and to come. (57) Those who were present promised obedience to Francis, and Francis promised to obey the Pope. The pious Pontiff gave this new Patriarch, with paternal kindness, instructions in various matters which related to the well-being and strengthening of the Institution ; and he assured him of his peculiar favour ; and finally, having

(56) It was a singular and personal favour, which this Pontiff and his successors did not extend, and which it was not necessary to extend ; because soon after there were in the order a great number of clerks. Moreover, it was necessary to adhere to the difference established by the general law of the Church, and by the special disposition of the rule, between the two states of clerks and lay-brethren who compose the Order of Friars Minor ; although they are both religious and members of the Order.

(57) We cannot doubt but that St. Francis was a deacon. For besides that, his three companions who wrote his Life, state that Pope Innocent III. gave him the deaconship ; St. Bonaventure expressly says that Francis, the Levite of J. C., sang the Gospel at a solemn mass. Celebrantes Missarum Solemnia, Levita Christi Francisco sacrum Evangelium decantante.

embraced each one of them, he gave them his blessing, and dismissed them filled with joy and consolation.

We have witnessed these favours renewed in 1723 by Innocent XIII., of happy memory, the fifth Pope of the ancient and illustrious house of the Counts of Segni, to which Innocent III. belonged. The holy Father, assisted by four cardinals, had the goodness to preside at the general chapter of the order of St. Francis, held at Rome in the convent of Ara Cœli, making known to all Christendom on that splendid occasion, that he looked upon the Friars Minor as his children, as much from family affection, as from his dignity of supreme Pontiff.

The illustrious author of the Variations, who quotes the abbot of Ursperg, says that it was to give to the Church true poor, more denuded and more humble than the false poor of Lyons, that Pope Innocent III. approved the institution of the Friars Minor assembled under Francis, who was a model of humility, and the wonder of the age. (58) The false poor, who are also known by the name of Vaudois, (59) and are placed in the number of heretics by Pope Lucius III., assumed the exterior of poverty and humility, although they had none of the spirit of poverty and humility. They were filled with hatred of the Church and its ministers, whom they reviled

(58) Hist. des Variations, tom. 2, liv. 2. n. 83 and 84.

(59) So called from Peter Valdo, a merchant of Lyons, born in the village of Vaud in Dauphiny, on the Rhone, the chief of the sect.

in their secret assemblies. In 1212 they feigned submission, and had the daring to go to Rome, to solicit the approbation of the Holy See for their sect, but they were rejected by the Pope, and from that time were considered as obstinate and incorrigible heretics.

Conrad, abbot of Ursperg, (60) who was at Rome when they came there in 1212 with Bernard their master, remarks that the Friars Minor (61) were very different from the false poor, practised poverty with sincerity, and were free from all errors; that they went barefooted in winter, as well as in summer; that they received no money, and lived wholly on alms, and were in everything obedient to the Holy Apostolic See; an obedience which will ever be a mark by which true virtue may be distinguished from false. Moreover, the strongest ties must always invariably attach the Order of Friars Minor to the Holy See, which is the centre of all the faithful. The order was born there; is in immediate dependance on it; has received numberless benefits from it; and its blessed Patriarch engaged solemnly to obey Pope Innocent III. and his successors.

(60) Chron. Ursperg. an. 1212.

(61) The abbot of Ursperg says in the same place, that the Friars Minor took at first the name of "Poor Minors," which they afterwards dropped, lest the title of poverty, which they practised, should appear ostentatious, and make them vain-glorious. Nevertheless, no author of the order mentions this name; and in the sixth chapter of the rule, which was approved by Pope Innocent III., it was directed that those who should profess it, should call themselves Friars Minor. The other name may have been given them by some, and the abbot may have thought that they had taken it.

Francis, finding himself protected by the Almighty, and authorised by the Pope, acquired great confidence. He placed his most apostolical order under the immediate protection of the holy Apostles, whose tomb he visited. He took leave of the cardinals, John of St. Paul, and Ugolini, whom he made acquainted with his intentions, and to whom he expressed his great gratitude; then he took his departure from Rome with his twelve companions, and bent his steps to the Valley of Spoleto, there to practise and preach the Gospel.

On the way he conversed with them on the means of adhering faithfully to the rule, and relative to the manner in which they should strive to attain perfection, so that they might be examples to others. One day the conference lasted so long, that the hour for their meal passed by without their having stopped; finding himself tired, they went a little out of the way to rest. They were very hungry, but they had no means of satisfying their craving. There then came to them a man who brought them a loaf, and immediately disappeared, without their having had it in their power to notice from what side he had come, or which way he had gone from them. Then, says St. Bonaventure, divine Providence came to the aid of the poor of Jesus Christ, when all human assistance failed them. They were well aware that the company of their holy founder procured them this favour from Heaven; and the miraculous nourishment they had just received, which renovated the strength of their minds as

well as that of their bodies, by the interior consolation they received from it, inspired them with a firm resolution never to swerve from the poverty to which they had devoted themselves, under any circumstances whatsoever.

Pursuing their route towards Orta, they came in the plain near that town to a church which had been deserted, and where, having offered up their prayers, they agreed to stop, until such time as they should learn where it was God's intention they should settle themselves. From thence they went daily to the town to preach penance in the public places; and it was with much fruit for the salvation of souls. The people began to feel attached to them; and as they saw that on their quests they refused everything but what was strictly necessary, they took them many things to the church to which they had retired, and those considered themselves fortunate who could make themselves useful to them. They even came in crowds to see them, and to listen to the discourse of these new men, whose actions and whose speech made them appear as persons descended from heaven.

But Francis, who found that this concourse of people interrupted and disturbed their spiritual exercises, determined to leave this place. The very beauty of it decided him to do so: it was a most agreeable spot; on one side there were meadows covered with beautiful flowers; on the other a thick wood, where birds carolled the live long day; near the church there was a fine spring, and a rivulet, whose waters murmured

pleasantly around them; the view of the whole plain, with that of the town beyond it on the heights, was all that could be wished. The holy man was fearful lest so delicious an abode should enervate the minds of his disciples, that the vigour of their intellect, so requisite for penitential reflections, should become relaxed when surrounded by objects so pleasant to the senses; and lest that which inspired gladsomeness should make them lose the seriousness necessary in prayer, and deprive them of the spiritual delight which is felt therein. Thus, as a skilful general who was the leader of the soldiers of Jesus Christ, and only followed His intentions, he made his little band raise their camp at the end of a fortnight, and resume their march towards the Valley of Spoleto.

In the way they counselled together whether they should communicate with the world, or whether they should retire into some solitary retreat; Francis, not choosing to trust either to his own lights or to those of his companions, had recourse with them to prayer, to ascertain what the will of God was on this head; and he learnt by a revelation, St. Bonaventure says, that God had sent him expressly to gain souls which the devil was endeavouring to draw away from Jesus Christ. He therefore resolved to dedicate himself to this holy employment, and to live a life which should be useful to his neighbour rather than to himself; being likewise animated thereto by the example of Him of whom

St. Paul said: "One died for all."(62) With this view he continued his route to the Valley of Spoleto, and brought his brethren to the hut at Rivo Torto, near Assisi, where he had been before.

One must feel surprised that St. Francis, with all the assurances he had of his vocation, could have doubted for a single instant that he had been sent by God for the spiritual service of his neighbours. But his doubts only had their rise in the powerful attraction he had for contemplation, which the tenderness of his conscience made him fearful of resisting, by employing himself in the exercises of an active life; and it was this that lessened his inclination for the functions of Apostolicity; for, according to the doctrine of the Fathers, and of Saint Bernard in particular,(63) there are no more worthy ministers of the Gospel than such as devote themselves to conversation with God in retreat, and who leave that retreat to preach the doctrines of salvation only when they have reason to think that God calls upon them so to do. Our Lord, who thus in his wisdom permitted that His servant should labour under this uncertainty, revealed to him already that he was destined to labour for the salvation of souls, and we shall see further on, that He assured him again by other revelations.

The hut in which these men devoted to evangelical poverty had retired, was so small and so confined, that far from being able to lie at full length

(62) 2 Cor. v. 14.

(63) D. Bern. in Cant. serm. 41 and 64.

in it, there was barely room for them to sit, insomuch so, that their Father was obliged to assign to each his place by writing his name on the joists, in order that they might pray and take their rest without being incommoded. They remained sometime in this miserable habitation, which might be looked upon more as a tomb for the living, or rather for such as were dead to the world; and they bore it for the love of God, with more fraternal charity and gaiety than can be described. The life they led there was so laborious, and so poor, that frequently not having a morsel of bread, necessity compelled them to search the country for herbs and roots, which they ate with satisfaction; preferring to be nourished with tears rather than with any other food.

Their most frequent exercise was prayer, and that more mental than vocal, because they had not as yet books for saying the Divine Office. A wooden Cross, of moderate size, which Francis had fixed in the middle of the hut, round which they prayed, served them instead of a book. They meditated on it unceasingly, and read in it with the eyes of faith, instructed by the example of their saintly chief, who often discoursed to them on the Passion and Cross of Jesus Christ.

However, they wished to learn from him what vocal prayers they ought to recite; and he told them, as our blessed Saviour had told the Apostles:(64) This is the prayer that you will say: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed

(64) Math. vi. 9.

be Thy name," &c. To which he added the Act of Adoration which he had before taught them: "Lord Jesus Christ, we adore Thee in all the Churches in the whole world, and we bless Thee for having redeemed the world by Thy holy Cross." He likewise taught them to praise God in all things, to make use of all creatures, to raise up their minds to Him, to have great respect for Priests, to be inviolably attached to the true faith, which is believed and taught by the holy Roman Church, and to confess it plainly. His faithful disciples put in practice all that he taught them, and conformed to all his maxims, which they did in still greater perfection after the marvel which we are about to relate.

Francis being one Saturday in Assisi, in order to preach on the Sunday morning in the cathedral, as it was his custom to do, retired to a small shed in a garden belonging to the Canons of the Church, to pass the night in contemplation, which he usually did. About midnight, a fiery car of great brilliancy, on which there was a globe as bright as the sun, and which gave a light equal to that of noon, entered into the hut in which the brethren were collected, and moved round it three times. Some of them were watching and praying; the others, who were taking a little rest, awoke. It is not to be expressed what was their astonishment when they found themselves enlightened as well interiorly as exteriorly, by this penetrating light, which manifested to them the state of their consciences.

St. Bonaventure remarks on the subject of this

marvellous light, on the testimony of those who had been witnesses of it, that they understood that by this luminous and burning figure, God represented to them the lively and holy flames which illuminated their Father, who, though absent in the body, was present with them in spirit, in order that, as true Israelites, like unto Eliseus, (65) they might look up to and imitate this new Elias, whom He had appointed the light and guide for spiritual men. Doubtless, he continues, the Lord, who opened the eyes of the servant of Eliseus, that he might see around that Prophet, that "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire," (66) would also, at the prayer of Francis, open those of his disciples to shew them the marvel which was operating in their favour.

At his return from Assisi, the Father conversed with his children on the prodigy which they had witnessed, and took occasion from it to confirm them in their vocation. He entered in detail as to the secret dispositions of their consciences; he foretold them many circumstances relative to the increase of his Order; he made known to them, in fine, so many sublime things beyond human ken, that they became perfectly aware that the Spirit of God rested fully on him, and that their greatest security would be in a conformity of themselves to his life and doctrine.

People were so greatly moved and affected by his virtues and his discourses, that many pre-

(65) 4 Reg. ii. 11 and 12.

(66) 4 Reg. vi. 17.

sented themselves to join his Order, but he declined as yet to receive them, because the hut was too small for the twelve he had; but he availed himself of the opportunity to say to these: "My dear brethren, God in His goodness has made known to me, that He proposes to increase our poor family. I cannot receive those who wish to join us, until I have a place large enough to admit all. We require a larger habitation, as well as a church, where we may hear mass, say the Divine Office, and deposit in peace those of our society who may die. Let us therefore go to our Lord Bishop and the Canons. Let us earnestly entreat of them, for the love of God, to cede to us some church near the town, and to put our rising Order under cover in some part of their domain. If they cannot assist us, we will go and ask the same favour of the Religious of Mount Soubazo."

The Bishop of Assisi and the Canons had it not in their power to promote their views, having no church at their disposal; but the Abbot of Mount Soubazo, with the consent of the community, granted him for himself and his brethren the chapel of St. Mary of the Angels, or of Portiuncula, which he had put into repair; but he added this condition, that if the Institution became more extended, this Church should be always considered the place of its origin, and the chief monastery.

Francis received the present, and accepted the condition with great thankfulness, and came and told his brethren of it, expressing the pleasure he

felt, in having for the first church of his Order a church of the Blessed Virgin, very small and very poor, obtained by begging, and in which he had first taken upon himself the Apostolic life.

On the same day he went to St. Mary of the Angels, where a pious ecclesiastic of Assisi was living, whose name was Peter Mazancoli, to whom the care of that Church had been intrusted after it had been repaired. He communicated to him the cession which the Religious of Mount Soubazo had made to his Order, and begged him to come and live with his brethren.

As true piety, which is charity itself, is never jealous, and is delighted in what is of advantage to its neighbours, the ecclesiastic embraced Francis, and assured him how desirous he was to see the Blessed Virgin honoured and praised in this place, which she loved, where concerts by the Angelic host were constantly heard. As a proof of this, he called a labourer of the vicinity, who certified to have several times heard in the night melodious canticles, and to have seen a great light come forth from the windows.

The experience of Francis himself was an additional proof. For being in prayer during the following night in order to recommend his family to the protection of the Blessed Virgin, he saw on the altar, by means of a splendid light, our Saviour Jesus Christ, His holy Mother, and a multitude of angels, who cast upon him looks of great benignity. He adored, and recited these words: "O most holy Lord, King of heaven, Redeemer of the world, sweet Love; and Thou,

O Queen of angels, by what excess of goodness do you come down from heaven into this small and poor chapel?" He immediately heard this reply: "I am come with my Mother to settle you and yours in this place, which is very dear to us." All then disappeared, and Francis exclaimed, "Truly this place is holy, which ought to be inhabited by angels, rather than by men. As long as I possibly can I will not leave it; it shall be for me and mine, an eternal monument of the goodness of God!" It became, in fact, a great object of devotion and veneration for himself and his brethren, particularly after it had been revealed to him, that among all the temples consecrated under the name of the Blessed Virgin, this was the one for which she had the greatest attachment.

At break of day he sent for the other religious by his companions, with directions to bring with them the few pieces of furniture which they had in the hut at Rivo Torto, in order to place them in the house adjoining the church of St. Mary of the Angels, which the pious ecclesiastic willingly gave up to them.

He communicated to the new guests the sanctity of the place they were about to inhabit, and recommended them to live therein holily, never ceasing to praise the Lord. Then he said to them: "You must be very grateful to the Benedictine fathers for the benefit they have conferred upon us. They have consecrated all the habitations we shall hereafter have, by this house of God, which is the model of the poverty which

must be observed in all the houses of our order, and the precious germ of the holiness which we must seek for in it."

But in order to show that he did not live there as on a property wholly his, as well as for a mark of his gratitude to his benefactors, he took care to have taken yearly to the abbey of Mount Soubazo, as a ground-rent, a basket of fish, a species of mullet, which is taken in quantities in the river Asi, or Chiascio, near the church of St. Mary of the Angels. The Friars Minor have always cherished the feelings of the blessed patriarch for the order of St. Benedict. They will ever manifest, with sincerest gratitude, that it is to this great order, so ancient and so celebrated in the Church, that they are indebted for their first establishment, and for many other benefits.

BOOK II.

THE LIFE

OF

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

BOOK II.

A. D. 1210.

It was therefore in the small church of St. Mary of the Angels, or of Portiuncula, (1) that Francis laid the foundations of the order of Friars Minor, which spread over the whole earth with wonderful rapidity. This holy place was, as it were, the cradle of the Institute, and the nursery of the houses of the religious ; the source which supplied a great river, which was divided into various channels ; the citadel from whence numerous brave warriors went forth to encounter the enemies of the Church ; the school which has produced a very great number of saints, and a multitude of learned men, whose doctrine and piety have been equally celebrated.

(1) Some persons have imagined that the Saint had given the name of Portiuncula to this church, as to the small part he had wished for, and had received for the shelter of his little flock ; it is even recorded in the first lesson of the second Nocturn of the festival of the Portiuncula. However, St. Bonaventure expressly says, that this chapel was called Portiuncula when St. Francis undertook to put it in repair. Both the one and the other are true, it had this name because of some portions of the land belonging to the Benedictins, as has been remarked, from the ancient Legend ; and St. Francis confirmed this name to it in consequence not only of the smallness of their numbers when it was given to them, but also from the title of Minors, which he gave his brethren, in order that they might always be the lowly and humble flock according to the Gospel.

The new habitation, less confined than the hut of Rivo Torto, enabled the Patriarch to receive the postulants who had before presented themselves; among whom may be noticed, Leo, Rufino, Masseo of Marignan, and Juniper. Leo, whom Francis chose for his confessor and secretary, and whom he generally called Pecorella Di Dio, (the sheep of God) on account of his admirable candour. Rufino, of whom he said "I learnt by a revelation, that he is one of the most faithful and of the most pure souls that there was in the world, and I should have no fear of giving him, though in a mortal body, the title of saint, since he is already canonized in heaven." Masséo, whom he often sent, instead of going himself, to converse with persons of piety, in order not to be interrupted in his own meditations, because this religious added great mildness and suavity of manner to a rare talent of speaking about heavenly things. Juniper, whom he found so valuable for his evangelical simplicity, for his contempt of himself, and for his great desire to attract upon himself the contempt of the world, that, alluding to his name, he used to say good-humouredly: "I wish to God we had a wood full of such Junipers."

The charitable father had all his children in his heart, and he brought them up with a tenderness truly maternal. He was the first to go from door to door, to ask charity to provide for their wants; sometimes he even went alone to spare them the mortification of begging, under the impression that they might still retain the prejudices of the world on this head. But the weak-

ness of his frame not admitting of his providing for all, and his religious being bound to subsist on charity alone, he resolved to teach them to solicit it for the love of God, and he made them the following exhortation, which they have recorded:

"My very dear brethren and well beloved children, be not ashamed of soliciting alms, since our Lord became poor in this world for the love of us, and that, following His example, we have chosen this state of the most perfect poverty. For if we have made this choice for the love of Jesus Christ, we must not blush at begging in our quality of poor. Heirs of the kingdom of God should not blush at what is a pledge of their heirship. Yes, we are heirs of heaven; this is a benefit which our Lord has obtained for us, to which He has given us a right, as He has to all those who choose to live in a state of holy poverty. I make known to you as a truth, that a great number of the most noble of the age will become members of this order, who will consider it an honour to solicit alms, and who will look upon it as a favour to be permitted to do so. You, therefore, who are the very first of the order, do this cheerfully, do not refuse to practise what you will have to teach these saintly personages. Go, then, and with the blessing of God solicit alms, full of confidence and joy, more than would be felt by him who should offer a hundred for one. For it is the love of God you offer in asking, when you say, 'For the love of God, bestow your charity on

me,' and in comparison with this divine love, heaven and earth are as nothing."

To mitigate the reluctance still felt by some of them, he brought forward the two following motives: "The bread which holy poverty causes to be collected from door to door, is the bread of angels, because it is the good angels who inspire the faithful to bestow it for the love of God. It is thus that the words of the prophet: (2) 'Man ate the bread of angels,' (3) is fulfilled in these holy poor ones. God has given the Friars Minor to the world in these latter times, that the elect may have it in their power to practise what will cause them to be glorified by the Supreme Judge, when He will address them in these mellifluous words: 'What you did to one of these, the least of My brethren, you did it to Me.' (4) It is pleasing to solicit charity in the capacity of a Friar Minor, whom our Master seemed to designate expressly, by the appellation, 'the least of My brethren.' " (5)

The disciples, persuaded and moved by this appeal, went of their own accord to quest in the neighbouring places to get the better of the natural repugnance they felt to it; at their re-

(2) Ps. lxxvii. 29.

(3) This is literally understood of the manna which was prepared by the angels; and in the figurative sense of the most holy Eucharist, which is called the bread of angels. The Saint in this place makes the application.

(4) Math. xxv. 40.

(5) He alludes in this to the name of Friars Minor, which is contained in these words of Jesus Christ: "Quamdiu non fecistis uni de minoribus his, nec Mihi fecistis.

turn they presented themselves to their father with satisfied countenances, which delighted him, and by a holy emulation they were proud of the things they had collected for the love of God. One of them returning one day with much cheerfulness, singing loudly the praises of the great Benefactor of men, Francis took from him the weighty wallet, which was full of bits of bread, placed it on his own shoulders, kissed the shoulders of him who had carried it, and came and said publicly: "So it is that I wish my brethren to go always on the quest, and return from it: ever gay, and glorifying God for all the good which He does in our favour."

The blessed founder employed himself day and night unceasingly in inspiring them with the love and practice of the most sublime virtues; he warned and exhorted each one of them in particular, and he made discourses to them when collected, on the most essential heads; and this again he enforced by his own good example; knowing that they were called by God to train up those who would embrace his rule in the different parts of the earth, and that on the instruction of the one depended that of the others. What he taught them on the subject of poverty, mortification, obedience, prayer, humility, and generally on all the means of acquiring religious perfection, will be noticed at the end of the Life.

Under such a master, with the powerful assistance which they received from Heaven, they made in a short time such considerable progress, that the latest comers were not less competent

for the exercise of the evangelical ministry than the first. Altogether animated with the same spirit, watching, fasting, praying, penetrated with the fear of God, full of holy desires, they resembled in a great degree the primitive church confined in the supper room. Francis, who was perfectly acquainted with their most inward feelings, and with the intentions of divine Providence, thought that he ought not to delay sending them forth on missions; according to the idea of St. Chrysostom, (6) who says that the Apostles, who were commissioned to labour in the conversion of the world, were necessarily separated, and that it would have been very prejudicial to the interests of the universe had they kept together longer.

But as he had not yet heard them preach, he desired prudently to judge by his own experience of their respective talents. Having assembled them together, he desired Bernard de Quintavallo to speak on the mysteries of religion. He immediately obeyed, and spoke beautifully on the several points. Peter of Catania was directed to set forth the greatness of God, which he did with as much facility and learning as if he had been long perfect in the art of preaching. A third was called upon to give an exhortation on avoiding sin, and practising virtue, which he complied with in powerful language. In short, they all handled the subjects which were allotted to them, so as plainly to show that wisdom was given to them from on high.

(6) S. Chrysost. Homil. 87, in Joan. circ. med.

After they had made this essay in preaching, or rather this masterpiece of eloquence, Jesus Christ, who had inspired their thoughts and words, appeared in the midst of them in the form of a very beautiful young man, and gave His blessing to each of them successively, with wonderful benignity. This astonishing vision threw them into a rapturous transport; after which Francis addressed them as follows:

"My brethren, and dear children, give abundant thanks to God most powerful, and to His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, for having deigned to have communicated celestial treasures through the speeches of the most simple of men; for it is God who causes infants to speak, who opens the mouths of little children, and makes the tongues of the most ignorant eloquent: His goodness renders Him compassionate to the world, which is loaded with crime. He has resolved to warn men of the woes into which they are plunging themselves; and in order to root out from amongst them the works of the devil, which are sins, (7) He has chosen vile and despicable preachers, (8) so that no one shall have reason to glorify himself before Him, and that every one shall acknowledge that all the good which is done comes from Him. Although there are few among you of whom it can be said that they have worldly wisdom, or are powerful or noble, yet it is you whom the Lord hath chosen for this

(7) 1 John. iii. 8. (8) 1 Cor. i. 28, 29, and 26.

important work. It is His will that you should go into all parts to honour Him by your actions and by your words, bringing to His fear and to His love such as have strayed into evil ways.

"Prepare yourselves therefore to set forth; gird your loins (9) according to the commands of Jesus Christ; be courageous; put on the armour of faith; (10) be devoted to the service of the Gospel; always prepared to let yourselves be carried away as clouds, whithersoever the Spirit of God may direct you, by the guidance of obedience, to shed the dew of the divine word on the dry and arid soil of hardened hearts. (11) For our Lord has not called you into this institute to think of nothing but saving your own souls quietly, without any fatigue, in the hearts of your country, and in the bosom of your families; His intention is, that you carry His name and His faith into the nations, and before the kings of the earth. (12) Now lest we should appear to be slow in carrying His will into execution, we will divide Italy amongst us; and soon after, we will make other missions into more distant countries."

To this discourse the disciples replied, that they were prepared for everything; that having renounced their own will, they only waited the order to commence their journey; and that the

(9) Luke xii. 35. (10) Ephes. vi. 11, 13, and 16.

(11) Isaias lx. 8. (12) Acts ix. 15.

distrust they had of themselves in consequence of their simplicity, was counterbalanced by the confidence they had in the assistance of the Almighty, which animated them.

The next morning Francis divided Italy among them, taking Tuscany for himself with Sylvester, who was the first priest in his order, so that he might by this arrangement be at the shortest distance from St. Mary of the Angels, where he left some of the brethren to guide the novices whom he should send there.

Two reasons induced him to make his beginning in Italy. The first was, that it appeared to him to be just that the divine Word should be first spread in that country, of which the preachers were natives, as the Apostles had done in regard to the Jews. The second was, that he might judge from what they should effect among the Italians, what they were capable of effecting elsewhere; in which his judgment is to be admired. He could not doubt but that the vocation of his children came from God; nevertheless, he used all the precautions which prudence dictated, because he knew that the Lord, who acts according to His good pleasure by secret and supernatural means, chooses that men on their part should pursue the ordinary course in all that depends on them. This is a sure ground-work, which is not only a rule in all that relates to salvation, but also is applicable to the affairs of this life.

The man of God having commenced his route towards Tuscany, passed through Perugia, where

he preached in the great Square, as is customary in Italy. Some young gentlemen, of the first families of the place, came also there for the exercises of the tournament, and made so much noise that the preacher could be no longer heard. As they continued their lance exercises, notwithstanding the remonstrance of the people, the Saint, turning to the side in which they were, addressed them in the following words with great animation:

"Pay attention, and learn what the Lord declares to you through me, who am His servant, and do not imagine to satisfy yourselves by saying, This is only a man from Assisi who speaks to you; (a precaution he took because Perugia and Assisi, neighbouring towns, were always opposed to each other,) what I tell you, I do not tell you as man. God has raised you above all the adjacent countries; in gratitude for which you should humble yourselves, not merely in His eyes, but before all the world. But on the contrary, your strength and your glory have so inflamed your pride, that you have pillaged and laid waste all that surrounds you, and you have killed no inconsiderable number. For which reason I declare to you that unless you be speedily converted, and repair the damage you have done, the Lord, who suffers no evil to be committed with impunity, will take revenge on your sins. In order to create in you the greater dismay, He will suffer you to rise up one against the other, to excite a popular commotion, and to do yourselves

much greater injury than any your neighbours could do to you."

He remained some time at Perugia, where they soon saw the effect of his threats. The nobles were irritated against the plebeians, the clergy joined the party of the nobles, and they came to blows; the people, who were the strongest, drove the others out of the town. The discomfited party, in order to be revenged, laid waste everything in the country which belonged to the people; who, by way of reprisals, pillaged the houses of the nobles, and massacred their servants and even their children. Indeed the disaster was so great, that according to the prediction, armed neighbours could not have caused any greater.

The Perugians having thus, at their cost, discovered the holiness of the preacher, wished to retain him in their city, and entreated him to choose what place he pleased for his abode. Many young persons of pure morals joined his order; one among others, whose vocation was very singular. As he was walking one day out of the town, his mind intent upon his wish to consecrate himself to God, Jesus Christ appeared to him, and said: "Man of desires, if you hope to be in the enjoyment of what you wish for, and to effect your salvation, take a religious habit and follow Me." He immediately asked into what order he should enter. Our Lord answered him: "Join the new order of Francis of Assisi." He then made this further inquiry: "Lord, when I shall have joined that order, what mode of life shall I follow, to be more agreeable to Thee?"

and this is the answer he received: "Lead the usual life: enter into no particular intimacies with your brethren; take no notice of the defects of others, and form no opinion to their disadvantage." These are admirable means for living holily and peaceably in a community. The young man came and offered himself to Francis, who knew that Jesus Christ had sent him, and admitted him immediately, and gave him the name of Brother Humble, on account of the humility he found in his heart.

At Cortona, to which place he next took the word of God, there was another young man named Guy, who, moved by his preaching, had invited him to dinner: "This young man," said Francis, "will enter our militia to-day, and will sanctify himself in this town." He was the oldest of his family, brought up in study and in virtue, and the excellence of whose conduct exceeded even that of his education. He frequented the churches and the sacraments, he gave great alms, and visited the sick to assist them; he wore a hair-shirt, and chastised his body severely, to enable him to preserve his virginal purity, which he had made a vow to do. After the dinner, he knelt down and petitioned for the habit of a Friar Minor, which he received in the principal church of the town, in the presence of a numerous concourse of people, after having first fulfilled two conditions which the father had prescribed for him: the first was, to give to the poor all that he had inherited by his right of primogeniture; the second was, to renounce all

the rest of his fortune. It was in the same town that he lived a most holy life,(13) as had been foretold, honoured by many miracles; and by permission of the Holy See, he is publicly invoked.

The love of prayer and retirement made Francis wish to find in the neighbourhood of Cortona a fit place for building a house suitable for the education of his novices. Guy pointed one out to him in the valley near a place called Celles. This location greatly pleased him, because it was solitary; and by the aid of some pious persons, he built a very poor dwelling, which he soon filled with novices, and where he received the celebrated Brother Elias, of whom we shall have much to say hereafter.

Having spent nearly two months in preaching at Cortona, and in forming his novices at the convent of Celles, he was inspired to pass over to a desert island in the middle of the lake of Perugia. Lent was drawing near. He recommended the care of the house to Sylvester, without letting him know what his own intention was; and on Ash Wednesday he caused himself to be taken to the island by a boatman, having with him only two loaves of bread; the boatman was a worthy man and his friend, and he begged him not to tell any one where he was, and only come to take him back on the Wednesday of Holy Week.

Having made himself there a sort of hut in

(13) His Life is given on the 12th of June, by the continuators of Bollandus

one of the thickets, to preserve himself from the cold, he had his intercourse with God alone during two-and-forty days, and his fast was so rigorous, that of the two loaves he brought with him he only ate half a one. In the ecclesiastical history (14) we meet with examples of these miraculous fasts, of which the holy Fathers have had an assured knowledge, and which the weakness of human nature was enabled to sustain by virtue of the Spirit of God, which supported them. The fruit which they were to derive from it, was to animate the faithful to keep with as much exactness as was in their power, the fasts prescribed by the Church, and particularly the fast of Lent, which many principal motives of religion render so venerable. (15)

On the Wednesday in Holy Week the boatman went to fetch Francis and bring him back to Cortona. On the passage the Saint stilled a storm, by making the sign of the cross on the waves; and as soon as he had landed he went to the convent at Celles, where he passed the remainder of the Holy Week with his brethren. His confidant did not think it necessary to keep the secret of the marvellous fast. The rumour spread, and many persons went to the island to see and venerate the hut in which he had lived. The miracles which were operated there by the merits of the Saint, induced some persons to build there, and gradually a small town arose,

(14) S. Greg. Naz. Carm. 47. Theodoret. Rel. Hist. cap. 26.

(15) S. Hierom. Epist. 21, ad Marcell. S. Aug. Epist. 36, ad Caful.

where later a church was built, with a convent of his order, near a spring at which he had drunk, where sick were afterwards cured.

After the Easter solemnities, he placed a superior in the convent; then having tenderly embraced the religious, he made the sign of the cross on them, and separated himself from them to go to Arezzo.

This town was at that time greatly agitated by intestine dissensions, which were likely to bring on its entire ruin. Francis being lodged in the suburbs, where he had been hospitably received, saw over the town, with the penetrating sight which the Almighty had given him, devils who excited the citizens to massacre each other, and who appeared to be transported with joy. To put these evil spirits to flight he sent Sylvester, as his herald, and gave him this command: "Go to the gate of the town, and standing before it, order the devils, in the name of the Almighty God, and in virtue of obedience, instantly to retire." Sylvester, who was a man of extraordinary simplicity, praising God beforehand for what was about to happen, went as fast as possible, and cried out with all his might: "All you devils who are here begone, go far from hence. It is in the name of God and of His servant, Francis, that I call upon you to go." At this very moment the citizens, who were on the point of flying to arms, came to an understanding on the points which were in dispute, and peace was restored to the town. On which St. Bonaventure remarks, that the obedience and

humility of Francis had obtained for him that absolute power over the proud spirits who fear and fly from the sublime virtue of the humble.

It became known in Arezzo who the author was of so sudden a reconciliation, because the words which had been spoken by Sylvester had been heard. Francis was sought for and brought into the town in a sort of triumph, notwithstanding the efforts he made to escape from this honour. He preached in the great Square on the the love of peace, and on the means of preserving it; pointing out to them that dissensions and quarrels came from, and are promoted by, the evil spirit. The magistrates entertained him at the town house, and had a convent built for his order according to his wishes; that is to say, according to holy poverty, in which he placed some worthy subjects who had presented themselves to him. A child was brought to him who was quite distorted; he took it into his arms, and it forthwith became straight. This miracle, and several others which he performed during his stay, proved that God had given him as much power over bodily complaints as over the evil spirits.

From Arezzo he bent his steps to Florence, preaching with great success throughout the route. The lords of Ganghereto received him with great respect, and were so pleased with the holiness of his life, that they begged his acceptance of a field and a small wood for the service of his religious. He set up a hut there, where his infirmities compelled him to remain some

time. After preaching and prayer, to which he daily gave some time, one after the other, he employed himself in building a small wall round a spring of water which he got miraculously, and which still flows, the water of which God was pleased to render salutary.

As soon as his health was in some degree restored, he continued his way towards Florence, where he went to lodge in the hospital. The following day he preached in the town, and was listened to as a Saint. They gave him a small dwelling near the church of St. Gall, about five hundred paces from the city, in which he received several novices, who rendered themselves illustrious by their exalted virtues; among whom John Parent is particularly noticed, who was a native of Carmignano, near Pistoia, a lawyer of great note, first magistrate of Fescennia, or Citta Castellana, who, for his distinguished merit, had had granted to him the rights and privileges of Roman citizens.

His conversion was attributable to a very peculiar circumstance. As he was walking one evening in the environs of the town, he saw a swineherd who was endeavouring to drive his pigs into a stable, and who being in a great passion because, instead of going in, they dispersed themselves in all directions, called out to them in his anger: "Swine, get into this stable as judges get into hell." He had scarcely said the words, when these animals went quietly in. That which might have appeared to this magistrate nothing but an impertinence, struck him, and made so strong an im-

pression upon him, that having seriously reflected on the dangers incurred by a judge (which are indeed very great) as to salvation, he threw up his magistracy, and retired to Florence. There he saw Francis, examined his conduct, admired his virtues, and felt himself called by God to imitate him. An only son of his had a similar vocation. The father and the son divided their all among the poor, and became disciples of the saint, (16) whose prophecy began thus to be fulfilled: that the wise and learned of the world would enter into his order.

Such a conversion sets before us this important truth, that the Spirit breatheth where He will;(17) that the Lord gives His grace sometimes to what is most common, most simple, and even most base, according to the notions of the world, that it is necessary to be attentive, that we may not receive the grace of God in vain; (18) and that little as it may seem at first, by being carefully attended to, it may have the most beneficial results. Not to be thankful for it, to neglect it, to resist it, is a heavy present loss, and running the risk of losing more.

While Francis was at St. Gall he foretold a thing which the event justified a few years afterwards. Three men at Florence brought each a

(16) John Parent shone in the Order of S. Francis, by the holiness of his life, and by the splendour of his talents. He was elected general of the order in the year 1230, and governed it with great prudence. It has been noticed that he made all his visitations on foot, and barefooted in many parts of Europe. Wading ad ann. 1211, no. 21.

(17) Joan. iii. 8. (18) 2 Cor. vi. 1.

child to receive his blessing. As soon as he was apprised of it, he went into the garden and gathered five figs; then he came in, and gave one to the first of the children, one to the second, and three to the third, to whom he addressed the following words: "You will be my dear child." That one when he had attained the proper age, took the habit of the Friars Minor, and was called Brother Angel, which he deserved by his angelic life, which which was the fruit of his great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, from whom he received very marked favours.

From the month of October, 1211, to the beginning of the year 1212, the man of God visited the towns of Pescia, Pisa, San Miniato, Sarthiano, Cetona, and other places in Tuscany, where he made many wonderful conversions, and left some of his brethren to continue the work of God. We shall relate at the end of his life the great honours which were publicly shown him, honours which he received with the greatest humility, and yet with the most generous sentiments.

The brethren whom he had dispersed in the other provinces of Italy, and who partook of his apostolic spirit, laboured on their part with great zeal and success. They founded many establishments, and formed many disciples, whom they sent to the holy founder in order to their receiving the habit of the order from him.

They mention particularly what happened at Bologna to Bernard de Quintavalle. As soon as he made his appearance, his extraordinary and very poor habit made him looked upon as a per-

son not worthy of notice. He went to the great Square in order to preach the truths of salvation, and he went there several times without having collected an audience. Children and idle people surrounded him; some pulled him by the hood, others threw mud and stones at him; and he was daily assailed with fresh outrages, which he bore with exemplary patience.

A lawyer having noticed this, made his reflections on it, and it occurred to him that his conduct might be attributed to virtue rather than insensibility. One day, then, he came up to Bernard and asked him who he was, and what he had come to do at Bologna. "You will know who I am," replied Bernard, "if you will take the trouble to read what I now offer you." It was the Rule of Francis, of which he had a copy, and which he placed in his hand. The lawyer having read it with astonishment, said to those who accompanied him: "I own I have never seen anything so perfect or so heroic as this mode of life. Those who ill-use this man are very criminal; he ought, on the contrary, to be loaded with honours, as a special friend of God." Then addressing himself to Bernard, he said: "If you will follow me, I will give you a place in which you may serve the Lord." Bernard, having accepted the offer, was taken to the house of his benefactor, who received him with affection, and gave him a house, which he furnished with everything necessary, and promised to protect him and his companions. After this Bernard was so highly respected in Bologna, that people

considered themselves fortunate if they could get near him, touch him, or even see him. This truly humbly man, mortified at the honour which was shown him, went to Francis, and said: "My Father, all is in good order in Bologna. But send any other religious thither rather than me, who may remain there; for I have no longer any hopes of being useful there; it is even to be feared that I may lose myself on account of the great honours I receive." This prudent mistrust of himself was as pleasing to the holy Father as the affection of the Bolognese, to which he responded by sending them several of his disciples, who subsequently spread the order throughout all Romagna.

The holy Patriarch returned some time before Lent to St. Mary of the Angels, where his first care was to examine rigidly whether in his evangelical progress some worldly dust might not have adhered to him in consequence of his communications with seculars; and in those instances in which the extreme delicacy of his conscience gave him room for self-reproach, he purified himself by very severe penitential observances. He then applied himself carefully to the formation of the novices, whom he had collected from various places, and he preached during the Lent at Assisi.

His discourses, backed by his example, and his prayers and exhortations, animated by an ardent zeal, were so efficacious, that in the town and county of Assisi a very great number of persons was converted, and the fire of divine

love was kindled in every heart. "Then," says St. Bonaventure, using the words of the Holy Scriptures, "the vine of the Lord spread its branches (19) and bore flowers of a most agreeable odour, and produced fruits of glory in abundance." There were many young girls who made vows of perpetual virginity, amongst whom, says the same holy doctor, the Blessed Clare appeared as the most beautiful plant in the garden of the celestial Spouse, and as a star more brilliant than all the others.

This illustrious maiden was the daughter of a rich and noble family of Assisi. (20) The Cavaliere Favorine, or Favarone, her father, was descended from the ancient and powerful house of Scifi and Fiumi. Her mother, of equally high birth and exalted piety, was called Hortulana. She had the talent of joining the care of her household to the practice of good works, and to regulate her time so well, that she found enough in which to visit, with the consent of her husband, many holy places; she even made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. If this practice is no longer usual in these days, particularly as regards distant countries, it arises from the circumstances of the times being very different, and from there having been a great change in manners. But Christian piety does not permit us altogether to condemn (independently of abuses) voyages or journeys of devotion, since they are

(19) Is. xxvii. 6, and xxxv. 2. Eccl. xxiv. 23.

(20) It has been said that about the year 1487 there were still at Assisi some descendants of the family of St. Clare.

sanctioned by the examples of the saints, have been approved by the Fathers of the Church, and since at one time they were directed as sacramental penances for certain sinners. (21)

Hortulana had three daughters, Clare, Agnes, Beatrix. Being about to be confined of the first, and praying to God before a crucifix in a church for a safe delivery, she heard a voice, which said to her: "Woman, fear not, thou wilt bring forth without danger, a light which will illuminate a vast space." This was the reason she gave the name of Clare to the daughter to whom she gave birth, in the hopes of seeing the accomplishment of what it might signify.

Indeed, from her earliest years, her virtue shone as an Aurora, the prognostication of a fine day. She received with docility the instructions of her mother, and her whole conduct was the fruit thereof; the exercise of prayer became familiar to her: she every day recited the Lord's Prayer a number of times, which she marked with small stones, (22) in order to be exact in the daily number she had assigned for herself; in that she resembled the solitary of the desert of Scethé,(23) who kept an account of the number of his pray-

(21) See P. Morin. Comment. Hist. de Pœnit.

(22) Heretics only, and bad Catholics, can disapprove of the order and arrangement adopted for private and public prayers. The Church has regulated the divine office in number and time, and she causes the same words to be frequently repeated to honour God and His saints. See on this subject the learned Mabillon, when treating of the Crown and of the Rosary, or Beads (Chapelet) of the Blessed Virgin. Act. SS: Ord. S. Bened. sec. 5, Præfet. no. 125, et seq. And Bellarmin. de Cultu Sanctorum lib. 3, cap. 8.

(23) Hist. Lausiac. cap. 23.

ers, offering them to God three hundred times each day. Naturally tender and compassionate to the poor, she aided them voluntarily, and the opulence of her family enabled her to assist them abundantly. But in order to render her charities more agreeable to God, she sent to the poor by confidential persons, the nicest eatables which were served to herself. The love of God, with which these holy practices inflamed her heart, inspired her with a hatred of her own body, and showed her the vanity of all the things of this world. Under her own costly dresses, which her situation in society obliged her to wear, she constantly had a hair-shirt; and she cleverly refused a proposal of marriage which her parents wished her to accept, recommending to God her virginity, which she intended to preserve in entire purity. Although she was at that time confined in the bosom of her family, and solely intent on sanctifying herself in secret before the eyes of God, her virtue became the subject of admiration, without her being conscious of it, and drew down upon her the esteem and praise of the whole town.

The great celebrity which the sanctity of Francis gained in the world, could not be unknown to the young Clare. Aware that this wonderful man renewed a perfection in the earth which was almost forgotten, she wished much to see him and to have conversation with him. Francis also, having heard the reputation of Clare's virtues, had an equal desire to communicate with her, that he might tear her from the

world and present her to Jesus Christ. They saw, and visited each other several times. Clare went to St. Mary of the Angels with a virtuous lady, a relation of hers, whose name was Bona Guelfuccii; Francis also came to see her, but always taking the necessary precautions to have the pious secret kept. She placed herself entirely under his guidance, and he soon persuaded her to consecrate herself to God. An interior view of eternal happiness inspired her with such contempt for the vanities of the world, and filled her heart with such divine love, that she had a complete loathing for finery, which it was not as yet permitted her to throw aside, and from that time she entered into engagements to live in a state of perpetual virginity.

The holy director did not choose that so pure a soul should continue longer exposed to the contagion of the world. She had herself come to him some days before Palm Sunday to hasten the execution of her intention; he told her to assist at the ceremony of the delivery of palms dressed in her usual ornaments, to leave Assisi the following night, as our Blessed Saviour had left Jerusalem to suffer on Mount Calvary, (24) and to come to the church of St. Mary of the Angels, where she would exchange her worldly ornaments for a penitential habit, and the vain joys of the world for holy lamentations over the Passion of Jesus Christ.

On the 18th of March, being Palm Sunday, Clare, magnificently dressed, went with other

(24) Heb. xiii. 12 and 13.

ladies to the cathedral church, and as she remained in her place out of bashfulness while the others crowded forward to receive the palms, the bishop came down from the altar and carried a palm branch to her, as a symbol of the victory she was about to gain over the world.

The following night, accompanied as propriety required, she arranged her flight as her spiritual Father had directed, and according to the earnest wish of her soul. Not being able to get out by the front door, of which she had not the key, she had the courage and strength to break open a small door which had been blocked up with stones and wood, and she repaired to the church, where Francis and his brethren, who were saying their matins, received her with great solemnity, bearing lighted tapers in their hands. They cut off her hair before the altar, and after she had taken off her ornaments with the help of the females who accompanied her, she received the penitential habit, consecrating her virginity to Jesus Christ, under the protection of the Queen of virgins, while the religious chanted hymns and canticles.

It was a touching scene to see a young noble lady, only eighteen years of age, in solitude in the middle of the night, renounce all the advantages and allurements of the world, put on sackcloth and a cord, and devote herself to a rigorous system of penitential exercises, solely for the love of God. Similar sacrifices can only be made by a supernatural virtue; they prove that the religion which inspires them is divine;

and justly does St. Ambrose consider them to be far above the most heroical pagan virtues.(25)

It must be remarked, moreover, that the church of St. Mary of the Angels, which was the cradle of the order of the poor evangelical brethren which Francis had just established, was also the place where Clare made profession of the same poverty, that she subsequently prescribed to the order of women, which she instituted together with the holy patriarch; this gives to the two orders the pleasing consolation of knowing that they belong to the Mother of God from their origin, and that she is specially their mother.

As soon as the ceremony was over, Francis, who was always guided by the spirit of wisdom, took the new bride of Jesus Christ, followed by her companions, to the monastery of Benedictines of St. Paul, there to remain until divine Providence should provide a dwelling for her.

When morning dawned, and her parents learnt what had occurred during the night, they were overwhelmed with grief. They equally disapproved of what Clare had done, and of the manner in which she had carried her intention into execution; and they went in great numbers to the monastery of St. Paul, to compel her to leave it. At first they spoke to her in mild and friendly terms; they represented to her that she was choosing a vile and contemptible state of life, which was disgraceful to her family, and that

(25) St. Ambros. lib. 1, de Virginibus, cap. 4,

there was no precedent in the whole country of such an occurrence. After which they attempted by violence to force her from the monastery; which they might easily have done, because in those times the religious females did not keep strict enclosure, besides which her relations were all military men, accustomed to acts of violence.

Clare uncovered her head to show them that she was shorn; and she protested, clinging to the altar, that nothing in the world should tear her from Jesus Christ. Either because they had too much respect for religion to venture to violate so holy an asylum, or that God restrained them by His power, they molested her no farther. She had only to resist the fresh efforts they made to induce her to return to her father. But the love of God gave her courage to resist with such determined firmness, that giving up all hopes of conquering her, they left her in peace.

A short time after Francis removed her from the monastery of St. Paul to that of St. Angelo de Panso, of the same Order of St. Benedict, near Assisi, to which she drew her sister Agnes. The conformity of their inclinations and manners, which rendered them tenderly united, had made them sensibly feel their separation. Clare was greatly grieved that Agnes, at so tender an age, should be exposed to the dangers of the world. She prayed fervently to the Almighty to cause her sister to feel the sweets of His grace, so that she might grow disgusted with the world, and become her companion in the service of Jesus Christ. Her prayer was soon favourably heard,

for a fortnight after her consecration Agnes came to her, and declared that she was decided to give herself wholly to God. "I return Him thanks," replied Clare, "for that He has thus relieved me from the uneasiness I was in on your account."

The indignation of the family was extreme, when it became known that one sister had followed the other. On the morrow, twelve of its principal members hastened to the monastery of St. Angelo. At first they feigned to have come in a peaceful mood; but having been admitted, they turned to Agnes, for they had no longer any hopes of Clare, and said, "What business have you here? Come immediately home with us." She replied, that she did not choose to leave her sister, when one of the knights, forgetting himself altogether, attacked her furiously, struck her with his fist, kicked her, pulled her down by the hair, and the others carried her off in their arms. All that this innocent lamb could do, thus torn by the wolves, was to cry out, "My dear sister, come to my aid; do not let them separate me from Jesus Christ." Clare could give her no assistance, but by praying to God to render her steadfast, and to check the violence of her ravishers. This prayer (26) was followed by a miraculous effect, similar to what the Church records in the Life of the illustrious virgin and martyr, St. Lucia.

As the relations of Agnes dragged her down the mountain, tearing her clothes, and scattering her

(26) Offic. S. Luciæ, Surius, cap. 3, Dec. n. 9.

hair along the road, because she continued violently to resist, she became suddenly so heavy, that they were unable to raise her from the ground, even with the help of persons who flocked from the fields and the vineyards. They were blind to the finger of God in so extraordinary an event, and they even made a jest of it; for ill-disposed persons, like the pharisees of the gospel, do not submit to the evidence of miracles, but carry their impiety to the length of turning all miracles into ridicule. The one which God was pleased to operate in the person of Agnes, threw her uncle, whose name was Monaldi, into such a rage, that he raised his arm to strike her in such a manner as would have killed her, if the Divine power had not arrested the blow by bringing such an excessive pain into the limb as to disable it, and which lasted a considerable time. This is a grand lesson for those parents who prevent their children from consecrating themselves to God in a religious state. If they do not experience in this world the effects of His anger,(27) they ought to fear the consequences of the anathema in the next, with which the Council of Trent menaces, not only them, but those also who compel their children to embrace a religious state.

Clare came to the field of battle, where she found her sister half dead. She entreated the relations to retire and to leave her in her care, which they regrettingly did. Agnes then rose

(27) Conc. Trid. sess, 25, de Regul. cap. 18.

with great ease, glad to have had a share in the cross of Jesus Christ. She returned to the monastery with her sister, to consecrate herself to God under the direction of Francis, who cut off her hair with his own hands, and instructed her in the duties of the state she was about to enter. Clare not having her mind quite at ease in the monastery of St. Angelo, removed to the house which adjoined the church of St. Damian, the first of the three which he had repaired, and where he had foretold that there would be one day a monastery of poor females, who should lead a sanctified life, and whose reputation would cause our Heavenly Father to be glorified.

Clare had scarcely fixed herself there, than the fame of her sanctity spread all around, and produced wonderful effects. The influence of grace was so great, that there were many persons of all sexes and all ages, of all states of life, nobles and rich, who took to a religious life. They mutually excited each other in families, as St. Jerome tells us that it occurred in all Africa, when the illustrious virgin Demetrias, moved by the exhortation of St. Augustine, took the holy veil.(28) It was even seen that married persons separated by mutual consent, and entered separate convents: and those who could not do this, strove to sanctify themselves in the world. The virtues of the holy spouse of Jesus Christ, as a precious perfume, attracted pure and innocent souls, who made the house of St. Damian a numerous monas-

(28) Div. Hieronym. Epist. 97, ad Demetriad.

tery, and the origin of the order of the poor sisters, or of St. Clare, the second of the three which were established by St. Francis. He appointed Clare abbess of St. Damian, although her humility made her wish to be the servant of the others, and he only overcame her repugnance by enforcing that obedience which she had promised him.

It was there that this holy abbess was inclosed during a period of forty-two years in the practice of the most eminent perfection, and which we shall have an opportunity of referring to, when we come to speak of her rule.

After Francis had regulated the spiritual exercises of these nuns, provided for the enclosure, and placed the house in good order, he turned in his mind what was personal to himself, and was for several days in great perplexity as to what his future way of life should be. In order to come to a decision, he consulted those of his brethren with whom he was in habits of familiar intercourse, and proposed to them his difficulties as follows:

"My brethren, what do you advise me? which of the two do you think best; that I shall give myself to prayer, or that I shall go forth to preach? To me it seems that prayer is what is most advantageous to me, for I am a simple person, who am not a good speaker, and I have received the gift of prayer, rather than that of speech: moreover, we gain much by prayer; it is the source of graces; but in preaching we only distribute to others what God has communi-

cated. Prayer purifies the heart and the affections; it unites us to the sole true and sovereign good, and strengthens us in virtue. Preaching renders the feet of the spiritual man dusty; it is an employment which dissipates and distracts, and which causes regular discipline to be relaxed. In fine, in prayer we speak to God and we listen to Him; we converse with the angels, as if we lived an evangelic life. In preaching we must have much condescension towards men, and living with them, we must hear and see, speak and think in some measure as they do, in a human way. But there is one thing which seems to prevail over all this before God, which is, that the only Son, who is in the bosom of His Father, and is the sovereign wisdom, came down from heaven to save souls, to instruct mankind by His example and by His word, to redeem them by His blood, and to make of this precious blood a bath and a celestial beverage: all that He had He gave up liberally and without reserve for our salvation. Now, having bound ourselves to do all things according to the model given us in His person, it seems more in conformity to the will of God, that I should give up my own repose in order to labour for the benefit of others."

After all these reflections, he continued in an anxious state of uncertainty as to the course he ought to take; and this man, who had wonderful knowledge through the spirit of prophecy, had no light thrown on his doubts by prayer: God permitting at that time that he should not be

sensible to the evident proofs he had, that he was called to the apostolic life.

We have already seen that powerful attractions to a contemplative life had given rise to similar difficulties arising in his mind. As he wished in all things to act faithfully and perfectly, his principal care was to apply himself to the virtues which he knew, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to be most agreeable to God.

St. Bonaventure says that this was the ground of his doubt, and he gives two reasons why God permitted that the saint should not have been able to solve the difficulty, the solution of which appeared so easy. The first is, in order that the heavenly oracles which had announced that Francis was destined to preach the Gospel should give a more exalted idea of the merits of that ministry; to this may be added, that it was of consequence that it should be known with certainty that the holy founder and his disciples were destined by Heaven to labour for the salvation of souls, since in after times it has been found that some of their adversaries have contested it. Secondly, the doubt of the servant of God was useful in preserving his humility and rendering it still greater. In the capacity of a Friar Minor, he was not ashamed of seeking the advice of the least of his brethren, he who had been taught such elevated things from the sovereign Master. It was likewise one of his maxims throughout his whole life, and of the principles of the sacred philosophy, of which he made profession, to address himself to the simple as well

as to the learned, to the imperfect as well as to the perfect, to the young as to the old, with the ardent desire to find from intercourse with them in what way and by what means he could best serve God according to His good pleasure, and raise himself to the greatest perfection.

Finally, we must not be surprised that he entreated God to grant him additional proofs of his vocation, after having received such convincing ones by revelations, by miracles, and from the mouth of the vicar of Jesus Christ; when we see in the sacred Scriptures,(29) that Gideon, having been chosen by God to fight the enemies of His people, and this choice having been manifested by the apparition of an angel, by a miracle and by a revelation, he nevertheless begged the Lord to give other miraculous signs, in order to be still further assured of it, and his prayer was granted. Would to God, that without asking for miracles and without expecting them, all vocations, particularly those for the holy ministries, and other affairs of conscience, were examined on such sound principles, and weighed by means as likely to deserve the light of Heaven.

In order to know how finally to decide, Francis sent two of his religious, Philip and Massé, to Brother Sylvester the priest, who was then on the mountain near Assisi, continually intent on prayer, begging him to consult the Lord on the subject of his doubt, and to let him know the

(29) Judic. vi. 12, 21, 25, 36, 39, 40.

result." He made a similar application to Clare, recommending her to put the same question to her sisters, and particularly to the one who should appear to her to be the most pure and most single-minded. The venerable priest and the consecrated virgin gave similar answers, and pronounced that it was the will of God that Francis should go forth to preach.

When the two religious returned Francis received them with great respect and affection; he washed their feet, embraced them, and gave them their meal. He then took them into the wood, where he knelt bareheaded and inclined, with his hands crossed upon his breast, and said to them: "Now tell me what my Lord Jesus Christ commands me to do?" "My very dear brother, and my Father," replied Massé, "Sylvester and Clare received precisely the same answer from our Lord Jesus Christ, which is, that you set out to preach; because it is not for your salvation alone that He called you, but for the salvation of others also; and for them He will put His words into your mouth."

Then Francis, moved by the Spirit of God, as the prophets had been, and inflamed by the fire of charity, rose up, saying, "Let us then go in the name of the Lord;" and he set out with two of his companions, Massé of Marignan, and Angelo of Rieti. He walked so fast to obey the words of Heaven, that it was easy to see that the Lord acted upon him, and that he had received fresh strength from above for the ministry of preaching. His companions were the more

convinced of this by the very extraordinary wonders which were worked by him on the route. As it pleased God to renew these often in his favour, they will be given altogether at the end of his Life.

The apostolical preacher went first to Bevagna, where he pronounced an excellent discourse on the love of God; after which, in presence of the whole audience, he restored the sight of a blind girl by putting spittle three times on her eyes in the name of the Blessed Trinity. This miracle had a salutary effect on a number of sinners, who were converted; and many of them joined him who was the instrument of the Divine Power.

So many souls gained to Jesus Christ in one place, stimulated him to carry the faith into the Levant. The triumph of martyrs, whose charity could not be extinguished by the violence of persecutions, excited in him a holy jealousy. Burning with similar fire, he wished to offer himself, as they had done, a sacrifice, in order to mark his gratitude in some measure, by the effusion of his blood, for the goodness of Jesus Christ, who vouchsafed to die for our salvation, thus the better to excite others to love Him. But he desired to have the sanction of the Sovereign Pontiff for this undertaking, and therefore bent his steps to Rome, preaching as he went the truths of salvation, which God confirmed by miracles.

Arrived at Rome, he sought an audience of the Pope. Innocent III. still filled the papal throne; he first communicated to him the won-

derful extension of his order, the holy lives of his brethren, and the design which God had to bring about a reformation of morals in the world, which was growing old, and was visibly in a state of decay. Then he disclosed the project he had of transporting himself to the lands of the Mahometans and Tartars, to endeavour to give them some knowledge of the Gospel. It must be remarked, that the Saint attributed to the world that decay which is the effect of old age, but he did not extend this to the Church, because he well knew that although old she was not infirm. St. Augustine says, that(30) her old age is always young, fresh, and vigorous, and that she bears fruit in abundance.(31) The Pope, who was very religious, was highly gratified at the fortunate success which he now learnt had attended the Saint's labours; he willingly granted the servant of God leave to preach to the infidels, and he affectionately gave him his blessing.

Two sermons which Francis preached at Rome procured him two disciples, Zachary and William; the one was a Roman, the other was an Englishman. John de Capella, of whom we have before spoken, having left the order about this time, and having had a similar end to that of Judas, William was substituted for him, as St. Mathias

(30) These words differ greatly from those which were said to the venerable servant of God Vincent of Paul, and which he heard with horror. See his Life written by M. Abelly, bishop of Rodez, in 1664, liv. 2. ch. 11: And La Vraie Defense de ses Sentimens, which the same prelate wrote in 1668, in refutation of a libel entitled: Defense de feu St. Vincent de Paul.

(31) S. August. in Psal. xxxvi. serm. 3, n. 4, et in Psal. xci. n. 11.

had filled the place of the traitor in the apostolate, and he was afterwards always considered as the twelfth of the first companions of the patriarch.

A Roman widow, very noble and very rich, called Jacqueline de Settesoli,(32) having heard the Saint preach, was very anxious to have an interview with him. He agreed to it, although reluctantly, and he gave her such salutary instructions, that she committed the care of all her affairs to her two sons, who were afterwards senators, in order that she might apply herself to the sanctification of her soul, employing the gift of tears which God had given her, to weep incessantly the neglects of her past life. This lady and St. Clare were the only two persons of the female sex with whom the servant of Jesus Christ had any intimate relations on the subject of their salvation; which ought to serve as a caution for this sort of direction not to be too greatly multiplied, and to have care taken that it be always holy.

As there is no affection more solid or more effective than that which is grounded on charity, the pious widow rendered to Francis and his

(32) Wading, not having found any traces of a family of that name, believes that the lady was so called from the part of Rome which she inhabited, which was called Septisolium, or Septemsolia, or Septasolis. Baronius says that this place was between Mount Palatine and the declivity of Scaurus; and that there were several ruins on which were raised seven thrones, which had the appearance of a high tower. Ad ann. 1084, n. 5. A manuscript in the Vatican says that the temple of the Sun, which was in the same place, bears the same name. Wading, ad ann. 1226, n. 28.

brethren all the good offices in her power. When they came to Rome she provided them with lodgings, she fed them, clothed them, and assisted them in their sicknesses with the tenderness of a mother. It was she who procured for them from the Benedictines of the abbey of St. Cosmas beyond the Tiber, a refuge in the hospital of St. Blaise; and this hospital with its church was entirely ceded to them by the same religious order in the year 1229, at the request of Pope Gregory IX.; it is at this day the convent of St. Francis of Ripa.(33) Thus the Friars Minor are indebted to the children of St. Benedict for the first establishment they had in Rome, as well as for that of St. Mary of the Angels, or Portiuncula, the first of the whole order.

Francis, having terminated his business at Rome, returned to St. Mary of the Angels, where he communicated to his brethren his intention of proceeding to the Levant. He exhorted them in the strongest terms to perfect themselves in the exercises of a religious life; he left them Peter of Catania as superior during his absence, and set out with one companion for Ascoli. At that place they were extremely anxious to see and hear this admirable man, who was everywhere looked upon as a saint; he was scarcely arrived in the town when all flocked to him; whichever way he went a crowd followed him; every

(33) It is on the borders of the Tiber. The cell of the Saint is visited out of devotion, which has been changed into a chapel, where several cardinals and prelates come to say mass. Wading, ad ann. 1229, n. 23.

one was anxious to get near him, and they pressed upon each other in order only to be able to touch his miserable habit. His presence and preaching in this town procured him thirty disciples, some priests, and some laymen, whom he placed in different houses of the order.

The desire of martyrdom which he aspired to from the infidels, did not admit of a longer stay at Ascoli; he therefore made for the sea-side, and embarked on board a vessel which was bound for Syria. But on the passage the winds became adverse, and they were obliged to come to anchor off Sclavonia, where he remained some days in hopes of finding some other vessel bound to the Levant. Not finding any, and perceiving that his intention had been foiled, he applied to some seamen who were about to sail to Ancona, to take him on board their vessel for the love of God. They refused obstinately to do so, because he had no money wherewith to pay his passage; notwithstanding this, the holy man contrived to slip secretly on board with his companion.

An unknown person came on board the vessel and brought provisions with him, saying to one of the passengers: "Worthy man, I confide these provisions to you, for the use of two poor religious who are secreted in the vessel; take care of them, and give them to them when required." Who could this charitable purveyor be? There is reason to think, with St. Bonaventure, that he was sent by God to the assistance of these two poor religious, who were only poor for love of Him. Stormy weather rendered the passage dis-

astrous; they could neither carry sail, nor return to land. All the sailors' provisions were expended; there was nothing left but the provisions put on board for the two religious. Divine Providence was pleased to multiply these, inasmuch that they sufficed for all who were in the vessel for several days, during which they were still at sea, before they reached Ancona. The sailors, astonished at this miracle, were convinced that the poor man whom they had refused to receive on board, had by his merits saved their lives, and they returned thanks to God for the mercy.

After having landed, Francis went to several places, spreading the word of God as a precious seed, which produced an ample harvest. Many came to see him from afar, so greatly had his reputation been disseminated. A celebrated poet came amongst others, having heard his entire contempt for the things of this world spoken of. He was of the class of persons who were called in Provence *Troubadours*, who invented fables, and composed different pieces of poetry, which were sung in the houses of the nobles. The art of versifying in the vulgar tongue was uncommon in those times, and was only practised by the nobility. The Italians imitated the people of Provence, and translated into their language the best compositions of the *Troubadours*. The poet of whom we are speaking excelled in this art, and the Emperor Frederic II. had crowned him as the Prince of Poets, which caused him to be usually called "The King of Verse."

Coming then to see Francis, he passed through

the borough town of San Severino, and entered the church of a monastery, where the servant of God was preaching on the Mystery of the Cross. He listened to him at first without knowing him; but God disclosed him to him in the course of the sermon, by two shining swords pierced through him cross-wise from the head to the feet, and from one hand to the other through the breast; from this he became aware that the preacher was the holy man of whom so much was spoken. The first impression which the vision made upon him was, that he ought to live a better life; but the words of the preacher filled him with such compunction, that he felt as if he had been pierced by the sword of the spirit which came out of his mouth, and he went after the sermon to renounce in his hands all the vanities of the world, and to embrace his institute. Francis, seeing him pass so perfectly from the agitations of the world to the peace of Jesus Christ, gave him the name of Brother Pacificus.

St. Bonaventure adds, that he was a man of so much holiness that he received the additional favour from God of seeing on the forehead of his Blessed Father a great *Tau*, (34) painted in a

(34) S. Jerome, on the ninth chapter of Ezekiel, says, that in his time they made use, in the Samaritan language, of the letter Tau, which is the last of the ancient Hebrew letters, and that it represented a cross. It is the *Tau* of the Greeks, and the large letter T of the Romans. It was God's pleasure, in the vision of the prophet, that this sign should be printed on the forehead of the faithful Jews, as the figure of the cross on which Jesus Christ was to be immolated for our salvation. From the Apostolic times,

variety of colours, which threw a remarkable softness on his countenance. This letter, which represents the cross, showed the interior comeliness which the love of the cross of the Son of God gave to his soul.

Watchfulness and affection inspired the Father with the wish to return into Tuscany, to visit the establishments he had founded there the preceding year, and to learn from his own inspection how they progressed in the ways of God. The family of the Ubaldini, which is among the most illustrious of Florence, gave him a convent which had been built and founded by their ancestors for the religious of the Order of St. Basil, in the sixth or seventh century, some leagues from the city, in the middle of a wood, and which had been since occupied by hermits. He put some of his companions into it, and returned towards the end of October to St. Mary of the Angels, preaching, as was his custom, in all the places he passed through. The repose he allowed himself after so much fatigue, was that of applying himself to the instruction of his disciples, and addressing discourses to them full of wisdom and prudence; an abridgment of which will be given at the end of this work.

At the end of this year he had an attack of ague, which became quartan, and reduced him to a great state of languor. The bishop of Assisi,

the Christians made the sign of the cross on themselves, and it was the sign of their profession. See Tertul. lib. 3, adv. Marcian, cap. 22, Corn. a Lapid. Est et Synops. crit. in cap. 9, Ezech. et Palæog. Græc. lib. 2, cap. 3.

who was a most charitable prelate, and his particular friend, having heard of his illness, came to see him, and notwithstanding his resistance, had him removed to the palace, where he attended to his recovery with the charity of a pastor and the affection of a parent. His religious came to him there to seek the lights they required. They also brought to him such postulants as presented themselves, and those who were recommended to him (thirty or forty at a time sometimes,) by the missionaries he had in various parts of Italy; for none were there received who had not been examined by the founder himself. A young gentleman from Lucca came with tears in his eyes, to entreat him to give him the habit. "Unfortunate young man," said the Saint, "why do you attempt to show by your eyes what is not in your heart? You have without due consideration formed a plan which you will soon as lightly give up." In fact, a few days after he went home with two of his relations who had come in search of him, and he thought no more of becoming a religious.

The servant of God, having regained some portion of strength during his residence with the bishop, by relaxing in the severity of his abstinences, which were extreme, became irritated with his own body, and was inflamed with the desire of humbling himself: "It is not right," he said, "that people should think me austere, while I am pampered in secret." Upon which the spirit of humility suggested to him an act which St. Bonaventure records, not as an ex-

ample, but as a prodigy, to be compared only with those extraordinary things which God commanded the prophets to perform. (35) He rose, and accompanied by a great number of his brethren, he went to the great Square of Assisi, assembled the people, and led them to the cathedral. Then he caused himself to be dragged by the vicar of his convent from the church to the place of execution, stripped, and with a cord round his neck, as the prophet Isaias. (36) There, weak as he still was, and shivering with cold, he addressed the assembly with surprising energy, and said in a loud voice: "I assure you that I ought not to receive honour as if I were a spiritual man. I am a carnal, sensual, and greedy man, whom you ought thoroughly to despise." The hearers, who knew the austerity of his life, struck with such a scene, admitted that such extraordinary humility was more to be admired than imitated.

Nevertheless, the holy doctor, whom we have just named, finds in this some wholesome instruction. It teaches us, he says, that in the practice of virtue, we must avoid with great care everything having any tendency to hypocrisy, repress the slightest approaches of vanity, and have a sovereign contempt for praise. The humble Francis, who strenuously laboured for his interior sanctification, did many things with a view of rendering himself contemptible, endeavouring above all to prevent men from being deceived

(35) Isai. xx. 2, et seq, Jerem. xxvii. 2, et xxviii. 13, Ezech. iv. 12 and 13.

in the idea they might have formed of his sanctity. This is the characteristic of true devotion; it has no borrowed exterior; it is, or it endeavours to be, all that it seems.

The religious whom Francis had sent into Lombardy, fulfilled the mission in an admirable manner. They acquired so much esteem at Milan by their preaching and by their good example, that the archbishop of that city, Henry Satalas gave them an establishment there, which became considerable later, by the liberality of the Milanese.

One of the fruits of their apostolic labours, was the vocation of a young man of rank, who was rich and talented, and who solicited the habit of the order. Upon their acquainting him that to become a Friar Minor it was requisite to renounce all temporal goods, he immediately disposed of all of which he was then master, and distributed the greater part to the poor, reserving the remainder to pay the expenses of his journey to Assisi, where he was told that it was necessary to present himself to the founder, who alone had the power of receiving novices.

He induced some of his relations and friends to accompany him, and took with him a considerable number of servants; one of the religious was also requested to go with them, in order to introduce the postulant, and favour his reception. When they arrived at St. Mary of the Angels, Francis, seeing such a number of persons, and such an appearance of vanity, asked the religious who was with them? who these lords were, and what they wanted? He answered: "My father, this is a

young man, learned and rich, of one of the first families of Milan, who wishes to become your disciple." Francis replied, before them all, smiling, "This young man does not seem to me to be fit for our order, for when people come with so much pomp, which is the mark of a proud spirit, to embrace a state of poverty, we are led to believe that they have not yet sufficient contempt and aversion for the world, and that they are not prepared wholly to relinquish it. But I will consult our brethren on the subject."

He assembled them all, and asked their opinion, which was not to receive him, because he had still a fund of pride, and because the love of the splendour of the world was not yet eradicated from his heart.

The young man who was present burst into tears; and Francis, who was moved with compassion, said: "My brethren, will you receive him if he consents to serve in the kitchen? it will be the means of inducing him to renounce the vanities of the world." They assented on this condition, which the postulant willingly agreed to, protesting that he was prepared to do anything that was required of him. The Father embraced him, after having returned to those who accompanied him his money and his equipage. He sent him to the hospital of St. Blasius of Rome, there to act as cook, and the young novice attained to such perfection in that humble employment, that Francis judged him worthy to be placed over others, and made him superior of the same place.

The line adopted in respect to this young man, shows evidently, that for the religious profession neither birth nor riches nor talents are to be heeded, but that the essential qualifications principally to be considered for this holy state, are, to be sincerely prepared to die to the world and to self. This is for the combined interest of those who have the admission of postulants, of the postulants themselves, and for that of the order itself.

At the beginning of the year 1213, the fever of which Francis had been cured at the Bishop's palace of Assisi recurred; sometimes it was tertian, sometimes quartan, but always with great severity. He bore the suffering with great equanimity, because of the hatred he felt for his body, and from the patience taught by Jesus Christ. The violence of the fever which burned his body, was in his opinion a lesser evil than the fire of temptations which inflame the soul; his sufferings appeared to him a gain. All the saints have had a like way of thinking, and the principles of Christianity admit of no other. The only uneasiness the sickness gave to the holy man, was its having prevented his putting in force the intentions he had in view for the salvation of souls. But charity, which is ever active, suggested to him to exhort the faithful in writing, as he could not do so in person; he therefore addressed them a short letter, (37) couched in the following terms :—

(36) Isai, xx. 2, et seq.

(37) There are some similar letters written by an ancient solitary, and by S. Columban. They had for models the letters of the Apostles, and the circulars that the prelates often wrote on

TO ALL CHRISTIAN PRIESTS, RELIGIOUS LAYMEN, MEN AND WOMEN, OVER THE WHOLE EARTH.

"O how happy are all those who love God, and who worthily practise all that Jesus Christ has taught in His holy gospel. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and thy neighbour as thyself. (38) Let us love and adore God with great purity of mind and heart; for that is what He seeks for above all things. He has said that the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth, and that they who adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and truth. (39) I salute you in our Lord."

This short letter was still fresh from his hand, when an infinity of copies were made of it, so anxious were all people to see anything that came from the hand of so holy a person. In this simple and brief exhortation they admired the candour of his soul and the extent of his charity; and in reading it they were moved by a power which penetrated the soul; for the words of the saints have a secret unction which is not found elsewhere. Many persons entreated him to write at greater length, and his zeal not permitting him to refuse so pious a request, he penned a second

points of faith, morals, or discipline, to be communicated to the churches. It was an effect of the charity with which the hearts of these holy men were inflamed, and which extended to the whole world. See Wading in Ep. 1, S. Fran.

(38) Math. xxii. 37 and 39. (39) Joan. iv. 23 and 24.

letter, of which we give an extract only here, because it is very long.

"To all Christian priests, religious, and laymen, as well women as men, in the whole earth ; brother Francis, their most humble servant, respectfully presents his services, wishing them the true peace which comes from heaven, and perfect charity in our Lord."

He remarks in the first place, that being the servant of all, and from his infirmities not having it in his power to preach the word of God in person, he has thought it his duty to supply for it by letters. He then proposes to them the incarnation, the institution of the eucharist, and the death of Jesus Christ, who offered Himself for us on the cross, because it was His wish to save us all, and who has left us an example that we may follow His footsteps. He urges the praising Him and keeping His commandments, which he enforces from motives of fear, of hope, and of love. He recommends frequenting churches, and having great respect for ecclesiastics. He exhorts to the use of prayer, of fasting, of almsgiving, of all works of penance, of confession and communion. He speaks of the love of our neighbour, of the administration of justice, of good government, of submission to legitimate authority, of Christian humility, and the duties of the religious states, and, finally, after having pointed out the misery of the body, which is nothing but corruption, and the happiness of the soul, which has wonderful relations with the Three Divine Persons he deplores the blindness of sinners, who permit them-

selves to be deceived by the world, the flesh, and the devil, and pictures the death of one of the rich of this world, who has only become such by a series of injustices; the representation of this is too vivid and too natural not to be laid before the reader.

A man of the world falls sick, death is at hand, and it must at length be said to him:—"Take order with thy house, for thou shalt die and not live." (40) His wife, his children, his relatives, his friends, crowd around his bed, and affect to weep. He looks at them, and weeps also. "See," he says to them, "what can be done for my soul, my body, for my property; I place all in your hands." Woeful and accursed, according to the words of the prophet, is he who places his salvation and his confidence in such hands. (41) The family calls in a priest, who knowing the life this man has led, asks him if he desires to confess his sins, and do penance for them, as much as may be in his power. The sick man replies in the affirmative. "But," continues the priest, "will you make restitution of all you have unjustly taken from others, and give of your wealth to satisfy the justice of God?" "Oh, as to that," replies the sick man, "it is impossible." "But why?" rejoins the priest. "Because," says the man, "I will not do such an injury to my family; I leave to them the whole of my property." While he thus argues, his malady grows worse, he loses the use of his speech, and dies in this deplor-

(40) Isa. xxxii. 1. (41) Jeremiah xvii. 5.

able state! Now all the world must know, that wherever, and in whatsoever manner a man dies in a state of mortal sin, without having satisfied the justice of God, as he might have done, he is stripped of all he had, and the devil carries off his soul, with sufferings which can only be known to those who feel them; that soul is tormented in hell, while the worms consume his body; his family share the property he leaves, and curse him for not leaving more. Thus, the love of the transitory goods of this world is the cause of his losing body and soul for all eternity."

The letter terminates in these words:—"I, brother Francis, the meanest of your servants, sincerely ready to kiss your feet, entreat and conjure you, by that charity which is God Himself, (42) to receive and put in practice, humbly and with affection, these words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all others which came from His mouth. May all those into whose hands they shall fall, and who shall understand their sense, send them to others, in order that they also may profit by them. If they persevere to the end in the good use they ought to make of them, may they receive the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen."

These spiritual services, and others which Francis rendered to his neighbour, with the continual instruction he gave to his brethren, were his occupations during his sickness, and until such time as returning health permitted him to do

(42) 1 Joan. iv. 16.

more. He was somewhat better in the spring, as is usually the case with those who have the quartan ague ; but his extraordinary austerities had so weakened his constitution, that he never wholly recovered his health, and the remainder of his life was little else than a state of languor.

As soon as he could commence travelling, he committed the care of his order to Peter of Catania, and set out with Bernard of Quintavalle and some others, in order to go to Morocco, through Spain, to preach the gospel to the Miramolin and to his subjects, in the hopes of attaining by this means the crown of martyrdom, which was the great object of his wishes. Feeble as he was, his zeal enabled him to walk fast, and he got before his companions : by the example of Jesus Christ, who, in going to Jerusalem, when He was to be delivered up to death, advanced quicker than His disciples, urged on by the ardent love He bore us, and anxious as He was to be immolated for our redemption. (43)

The servant of God did not reach Spain till near the end of the year, because he had stopped in various places to preach, to visit the houses of his order, and to receive accounts of others. His whole route was a succession of miracles, and other remarkable things, which contain admirable instructions.

At Foligno, the sign of the cross which he made on the house of his host, protected it from various accidents, and particularly from fire, which did no

(43) Mark x. 32.

damage to that dwelling, although the adjoining houses were three or four times on fire: the flames were even seen to take a contrary direction. At Spoleto, knowing that a rich man thought ill of his institute, and refused his brethren alms, he asked him only to give him a loaf; and having received it, he divided it among his religious, and directed them to say the Lord's Prayer and the evangelical salutation three times, for the person who had given it. Their scanty meal was scarcely finished, when this man came to ask forgiveness for the harshness he had shown them, and he was, after that, the best friend of their convent, so good an idea of their institution had the saint impressed upon him.

At Terni, the bishop who had listened to one of Francis' sermons, ascended the pulpit when he had done, and said to the people :—"My brethren, the Lord, who has often enlightened His church by men illustrious for their science, has now sent you this Francis whom you have just heard, a poor illiterate man, and contemptible in appearance, in order that he may edify you by his word and his example. The less learned he is, the more does the power of God shine in his person, who chooses those who are foolish according to the views of the world, to confound all worldly wisdom. The care which God takes of our salvation obliges us to honour and glorify Him; for He has not done the like to other nations."

Francis followed the prelate, fell on his knees, kissed his hand, and said :—"My lord, in very truth, no one has ever done me so much honour

as I have this day received from you. Some attribute to me a sort of sanctity, which no way belongs to me, and which ought to be referred to God alone, the author of every perfect gift. (44) But you, my lord, have wisely separated what is valuable from what is vile, the worthy from the unworthy, the saint from the sinner; (45) giving the glory to God, and not to me, who am but a miserable mortal. It is indeed only to God, the King of Ages, immortal and invisible, that men should give honour and glory for ever and ever." (46) The bishop, even more pleased with this specimen of his humility than with his preaching, embraced him affectionately.

In the same city, by the sign of the cross he rendered some sour wine perfectly good, and that before persons who had tasted it in its acid state. But he performed a much greater miracle, which was universally admired, on a young lad who had been just crushed by the fall of a wall; having had him brought to him, he applied himself to prayer, and extending himself on the corpse, as the prophet Eliseus had done on the child of the Sunamite, (47) he restored him to life.

In the county of Narni, he was lodged in the house of a worthy man who was in great affliction for the death of his brother, who had been drowned, and whose body could not be found, so that it might be buried. After having privately prayed for some time, he marked a spot in the river where

(44) Jac. i. 17.

(45) Jer. xv. 19. (46) 1 Tim. i. 17

(47) 1 Reg. iv. 34.

he said that the body certainly was at the bottom, where it had been stopped by the entanglement of the clothes. They dived there, and the body was found, which he restored to life in the presence of the whole family.

The fever, and a severe stomach complaint, caused him to faint in a hermitage which had been given him near the borough of St. Urban, and he asked for some wine to recover from the weakness which had ensued. As there was none to be had there, he had some water brought to him, which he blessed, by making the sign of the cross over it, and it was instantly changed thereby into excellent wine. The little that he took of it renovated him so promptly, that it was a double miracle. Upon which, St. Bonaventure remarks, that this wonderful change is a type of the change he had effected in his heart, in casting off the old man to put on the new. (48)

In the city of Narni, he cured a man who had lost the use of his limbs for five months from palsy, employing no other remedy than a sign of the cross, which he made over his whole body; this he did at the request of the bishop of the place, and by virtue of the same sign he restored the sight of a blind woman. Being at Orti, he straightened a child, who was so deformed that its head touched its feet. At San Gemini he prayed, with three of his companions, for the wife of his host, whom the devil had possessed for a long while, and the evil spirit left her. Such evident

(48) Coloss. iii. 9 and 10.

miracles, publicly performed, and in great numbers, gave a wonderful splendour to his sanctity. In the archives of the town of Poggibonsi, in Tuscany, the act of donation of a house given to him is preserved, which commences thus :—"We cede to a man named Francis, whom all the world considers as a saint," &c.

The discourses of so holy a man, of one so gifted with the power of miracles, had the greatest effect upon the hearts of his hearers, and made the people very anxious to have houses of his order established among them. He settled some of his religious at Foligno, at Trevi, at San Gemini, at Sienna, and in several other places.

Fresh disciples joined him from all quarters, but he did not receive any until he had strictly examined their vocation. A young gentleman having heard him preach at Monte Casale, a town in the Apennines, came to acquaint him with the design he had long formed of entering his order. "You must think seriously of it," replied Francis; "for the kind of life we lead must appear very hard to those who have been tenderly brought up." The young man answered courageously: "My father, are not you and yours of the same nature as I am, and formed of the same earth? I hope, with God's help, to bear without much inconvenience what my fellow-men can bear so willingly." These words were very pleasing to the patriarch, and the postulant was received. It must be admitted that man has resources of strength which he might make use of to imitate

the saints in many things, if he were not wanting in exertion and confidence in God.

From Monte Casale Francis passed over the Apennines, and went through the valley of Marecchia to reach Monte Feltro, or St. Leo. He learnt on the road that the lord of that town was about to be knighted at his castle, where he was giving a grand feast, accompanied by games and theatricals, to a numerous assembly of the nobility, among whom was Count Orlando Catanio, lord of Chiusi Nuovo, and of all the Casentino. Being near the castle, and hearing the sound of the trumpets, which denoted that the revelry was about to begin :—"Let us get hither also," he said to his companions, "and let us combat with all our might the devil, who never fails to lay his snares in these rejoicings, into which many fall; for it is our duty to labour everywhere and in all places for the salvation of souls." He went up to the castle, and heard the solemn mass with all those who accompanied the new knight. As soon as it was over, he took a position on a height near the church, in order to preach from thence, and the crowd gathered round him to listen.

He took the following Italian words for his text:—"Tanto è il ben che aspetto, che d'ogni pena mi diletto :" which means, "that the good which I hope for is so great, that to obtain it all suffering is pleasurable." He proved his text by this passage from St. Paul :—"The sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come ;" (49) by the example of the apos-

(49) Rom. viii. 18.

tles, who were filled with joy for having been found worthy to suffer for the Name of Jesus ; (50) by the example of the martyrs, who willingly exposed themselves to torments and death, that they might obtain heaven ; and, finally, by such cogent reasons, so pathetically set forth, that all the auditors admired the doctrine, and felt what he wished to inspire them with. They found in the preacher something divine, which commanded respect, and they fixed their looks upon his countenance as if it had been that of an angel.

Count Orlando, more impressed with what he had heard than the rest, went after the sermon to embrace the preacher, and he entreated him particularly to instruct him in the affairs of his salvation. Francis, who in addition to his ardent zeal, had much discretion and suavity of manner, said :—" Count, go now and do honour to your friends whom you have invited, and we will talk of this affair at a more convenient time." The Count, complying with this advice, joined the nobility who waited for him, and did not forget to take care of the servants of God. The feast having ended, he returned to the prudent director, with whom he had a lengthened conversation, with which he was so much struck, that in order to have the comfort of seeing familiarly the religious of his institute, he offered him the mountain of Alvernia, which belonged to him, with a promise, if he agreed to it, of building there a convent for him.

As this was a lonely place, very fit for contem-

(50) Acts v. 41.

plation, Francis gladly accepted the offer, and promised to send two of his brethren to Chiusi, before he should leave Italy. He did in fact send them, and the Count having received them as angels sent from heaven, he took them to Mount Alvernia, where they fixed upon a spot which appeared to them to be fit to build a church on. Fifty soldiers who had been brought thither began immediately to fell timber, and a place was cleared, where hutting was set up to lodge the religious, in which they dwelt until the church and convent were built. These are the circumstances under which the Friars Minor were settled on this mountain, which subsequently became so celebrated in the Christian world by the stigmata of Saint Francis. The place was ceded to them by an authentic document which the Count gave them, and which is preserved in the original in the archives of the convent. We shall speak further of this holy place when we come to relate the first visit the saint paid it on his return from Spain.

He continued his journey through Bologna, from whence, after having visited his brethren, he came to Imola. He first went to offer his respects to the bishop, and asked permission to preach to his people. "I preach," replied the bishop coldly, "and that is quite enough." Francis bowed humbly, and retired; but an hour afterwards he returned, and the bishop, surprised and angered at seeing him again, asked him what he could possibly want? to which he replied, in a tone of sincere humility: "My lord, if a father drives his

son out of the house by one door, it is right that the son should return through another." The bishop, mollified by this mild address, embraced him with affection, and said: "From henceforth you and your brethren may preach in my diocess. I give you a general leave, it is what your humility has merited." Is there anything which can soften minds and obtain favours sooner than this virtue?

The humility of Francis was accompanied with great courage, which rendered him firm and confident in the most imminent dangers, which was owing to the great confidence he had in God. Night overtook him once when he was in company with Leo, between Lombardy and the Trevisan Marshes, on a road having on one side the Po, one of the most considerable rivers in Italy, and on the other a deep morass. Leo, much alarmed, exclaimed: "Father, pray to God to deliver us from the danger we are in." Francis, full of faith, replied: "God can, if it is His good pleasure, give us light to dissipate the darkness of the night." These words were hardly spoken, when they found themselves surrounded by a brilliant light, which not only made the way clear to them, but enabled them to see many things on either side of the way, although the darkness was very dense everywhere else. They pursued their route singing the glories of God; the celestial torch served them as a guide till they reached the place where they were to be lodged, which was then very far off. This miraculous light was a notification

to the Saint that it was God's pleasure that he should have a dwelling in the place to which His goodness had led him, and he told this to his companion. The inhabitants made no difficulty in assigning him one, after having heard him preach, and he gave the convent the name of The Holy Fire, as it is still called.

In Piedmont, where he was very well received, his preaching, with the reputation of his sanctity, confirmed by many miracles, converted a considerable number of persons, and procured him several houses. (51) From thence he went into Spain, but the writers of his Life have not recorded by what route. But it is scarcely to be doubted that he went by land, and through France; ancient documents show that he entered Spain through Navarre, and that he arrived in the year 1213 at Logrono, a town of Old Castile, which had formerly belonged to Biscay.

On the road he came up with a poor and abandoned invalid, for whom he felt so much pity that he directed Bernard da Quintavalle, one of his companions, to stay with him and take care of him, which the other willingly undertook to do. At Lagrono he miraculously cured a young gentleman who was on the point of death; then he went on to Burgos, where Alphonso IX., (or

(51) Wading only says, that they gave him a house at Quiers, near Turin. But a learned Piedmontese author proves, not only from tradition but from documents taken from the archives of Savoy, and from those of convents, of which Wading had no knowledge, that Francis placed some of his brethren at Cairo, Cortemiglia, Asti, Montcalier, Turin, Veillane, and Susa; and that he did various marvellous things in Piedmont.

VIII., according to some,) father of Blanche, Queen of France, and mother of St. Louis, then was. Francis presented himself before the king; he showed him the rules of his institute, and entreated him to receive the Friars Minor into his states. This monarch, who, in addition to his political and military talents, had a great fund of goodness and piety, received the holy man very favourably; he condescended to read the rules, and after having conversed with him for some time, he gave leave to build houses in Spain for the order. (52)

The servant of God, fortified by the royal protection, procured a small church of St. Michael, near Burgos, where he dwelt for some time, and which he left in the care of two of the brethren, in order to continue his journey at the beginning of the year 1214. But Medrani, an officer of the army of the king of Castile, father of the young man whom he had cured at Lagrono, knowing that the king had permitted him to establish himself at Burgos, induced him to return to Lagrono, where he gave him his own house and

(52) The translator of Mariana's History of Spain, which appeared in 1725, should have remarked that Mariana was in error when he said that S. Francis established his order in Spain after that of S. Dominic, and after having had his institute approved by Honorius, and that in 1218. For it is certain that that Pope only gave his approval by Bull in 1225, to the order of the Saint, which Innocent III. had verbally approved in 1210, and that the Saint went into Spain in 1213, which proves that the order was introduced into Spain before that of S. Dominic; since the institute of this holy patriarch was only approved by Innocent III. at the Lateran Council, held in 1215, and not in 1212, as the translator inadvertently says in a note, and was only approved by a Bull of Honorius in 1216.

gardens to turn into a convent. Francis had it altered properly for the accommodation of religious, and placed it in charge of one of his companions, leaving in it, under his guidance, some of his novices, whom his preaching and miracles had drawn to him. He did the same at Vittoria, in respect to a dwelling, which, together with a church, he received from the municipality.

He then turned his thoughts entirely to advancing towards the sea-side in order to embark for Morocco, there to suffer martyrdom, for this was the great object of his wishes. If we only formed our opinion of things by the ordinary rules of prudence, we should be surprised, that a man, visibly sent by God for the institution of a new order of religious, should leave it so short a time after its birth, to seek for death among the infidels. But the Saints only thought of following the impulses which the Spirit of God suggested to them, with reference to the works which they had commenced by God's order. St. Anthony,(53) father of a great number of cenobites, left his monastery, and followed at Alexandria certain confessors of the faith; he attended upon them in prison, and exhorted them when under torment to procure for himself the palm of martyrdom. St. Dominic, animated by a similar spirit, had formed the intention of going among the Saracens, only two years after the institution of his order. (54) Francis, thus inspired from above,

(53) S. Athan. in vit. S. Anton. n. 45.

(54) Vit. S. Damin. à Theod. lib. 2, cap. 2.

desired to meet death for Jesus Christ, and left to God the care of his rising family.

This disposition, which was the fruit of ardent charity, was very pleasing to God; it entered into the economy of His providence for the salvation of souls and for the aggrandisement of the new order, for the Saint did not cease his labours when he took the route which was to lead to martyrdom. Nevertheless, God did not choose that his design should be carried into execution; and His will was made known to His servant by a violent illness, which put it out of his power to embark for Morocco. Francis gave up his wishes, obeying what was thus signified to him, and came to the resolution to return to Italy for the guidance of his flock; however, he did not set out till the close of the year.

The authors of the order are agreed in saying that he went to visit the tomb of the apostle St. James, at Compostella, the capital of Galicia, to which place devotion has attracted, for many centuries past, crowds of pilgrims, and that an angel appeared to him there, and assured him that it was God's will that he should return to Italy, after having founded some establishments in Spain. They also say that he went into Portugal,(55) where he raised to life the daughter of

(55) Some persons think that S. Francis saw Queen Urraqua, the wife of Alphonso II. in Portugal, and that he foretold to her, that Portugal would never be united to Spain. Wading proves that not to be true; and he adds, that had such a prediction been made, it could not be said up to this time that it was false, because the Spaniards had been masters of Portugal under Philip II. For besides that that occupation was temporary, there was never

his host at Guimaraens, a town of the diocess of Braganza, which caused him to be considered as a Saint throughout the whole country; and that he went through nearly the whole of the kingdom of Arragon and the adjacent provinces. And, finally, they relate a most extraordinary circumstance.

Francis being one evening on the banks of the river Orbego, with his companions, where there was no food, a young man of the town of Novia overtook them, and carried them over on some horses he had with him, and received them hospitably. The gratitude the Saint manifested, was by saying, "May the Lord reward you for the kindness you have shown us, when He rewards the just." Some short time after, this young man having gone to Rome out of devotion, and having endeavoured to put his conscience in a fit state, he prayed fervently to God, to take him out of this world before he should commit a mortal sin. His prayer was heard; he died. His father desired to have a funeral service said for him, and thirty Friars Minor attended it without having been asked; none knew from whence they came, nor whither they afterwards went, which made it thought that the assistance was miraculous; and as it was known what the holy man Francis had said to the deceased, it was understood that he had by this means procured the reward of

any true union between the two countries, even when the same king governed them. Portugal was subject to Spain, but not united. Philip II. declares this in an assembly of the states, and the public documents prove it. Wading, ad ann. 1213.

the just for him whose hospitality he had received.

Gonzagues, Bishop of Mantua, who had been General of the Order of St. Francis, says, that it is held as certain in Spain, that he commenced the establishments of Gasta, Arevalo, Avila, Madrid, Tudela, and caused several other convents to be built. It is easily understood that in the eight or nine months in which he remained in Spain after his illness, he arranged much by himself and by his companions; the old inscriptions which are still seen on the tombs of many of them are an additional proof. What is quite certain is, that his holy life and his preaching were of the greatest benefit to souls, and that his Order was received in Spain with an affection which has passed from age to age, from fathers to sons: so that Spain is one of the countries of the world in which there is the greatest veneration for St. Francis, and the greatest consideration for the Order of Friars Minor.

The same bishop tells us, on the testimony of universal and unvaried tradition, of many miracles performed by the Almighty, through the ministry of the holy man. We shall satisfy ourselves by relating one of them, which is warranted by manuscripts and documents.

Francis was lodged at Compostella, at the house of a poor dealer in charcoal, whose name was Cotolai, and he often went to pass the night in contemplation on a neighbouring mountain. God made known to him, that it was His will that he should build a convent between two valleys, the

one of which was commonly called the valley of God, and the other the valley of hell. He knew that this ground belonged to the Benedictines of Compostella, of the Abbey of St. Pay, or Pelagius, since transferred to that of St. Martin ; and bearing in mind the favours which the Religious of this holy Order had done him in the gifts of St. Mary of the Angels, and at Rome, he called upon the Abbot and asked him unhesitatingly permission to build a convent between the two valleys. "What will you give me in payment?" says the abbot. Francis replied, "As I am very poor, and have neither money, nor anything else to give you, if you grant me what I ask, and what will be most precious to me, I will give you in quit rent yearly, a small basket of fish if they can be caught in the river." The Abbot who was a very pious man, admiring his simplicity and his confidence, granted him his request on the condition proposed, and an act to that effect was prepared and signed by both.

The holy man came to Cotolai and told him what had passed between the Abbot of St. Pay and himself, and added: "My dear host, it is God's will that you should build this convent; therefore prepare yourself for the work. "Oh, how shall I be able to do that," answered Cotolai, "I who am so poor, and who live by my daily labour?" "Take courage," said Francis, "take a pickaxe, and go to the spring which is close by; make a hole a little in front of it, and you will find a treasure which will enable you to execute the order of heaven." Cotolai, relying on the

Saint's word, searched as he was desired, found the treasure, and built the convent, which is known by the name of St. Francis at this day. This fact is narrated in an authentic manuscript in the archives of the Abbey of St. Martin, from whence this is copied; and in two very old inscriptions, one of which is on the tomb of Cotolai and his wife, whose name was Mary de Bicos, and the other over the gate of the church of the convent in which their tomb is. The deed which was executed by Francis and the Abbot of St. Pay, is preserved in the original in the archives of the Abbey of St. Martin of Compostella. The Prince of Spain, Philip the Second, saw it in the year 1554, when he was about to embark at Corunna, to marry Mary, queen of England. However, the marvel has nothing in it which should be the cause of much surprise: our Saviour, who made St. Peter find in the mouth of a fish wherewithal to pay the tribute for his Master and himself, (56) could easily cause a treasure of money to be found sufficient to build a house for his faithful servant Francis.

When the apostolical man had terminated his mission in Spain, he went to rejoin Bernard de Quintavalle, whom he had left on entering it, in charge of the poor sick man, who was perfectly cured, and he came through Arragon into Catalonia. The magistrates of Barcelona, where he stopped for a short time, were so pleased with his poverty, his humility, and his other virtues, that

(56) Math. xvii. 26.

for the sake of having some religious of his order, they converted the hospital where he was lodged into a convent, the church and cloister of which are still extant, and are venerable from the remembrance of the Saint.

At San Saloni, a small town between Barcelona and Gerona, an adventure occurred to him which seemed purely accidental, but which God turned to good. As he walked by the side of a vineyard, his companion gathered a bunch or two of grapes to refresh himself. He who had charge of the vineyard perceiving it, came violently upon the religious, beat him and abused him in no measured terms, and took from him his poor cloak. Francis asked to have the cloak back, alleging mildly, that what had been taken had done no injury to the vineyard, and that good feeling required that this assistance should be given to a passer by who needed it.(57) But not having succeeded in procuring its restoration, he went to the proprietor of the vineyard, from whom he had no difficulty in getting it back, after having told him what had happened. He then conversed with him on heavenly things with such effect, that the man devoting himself from that moment to his service, promised to receive hospitably all the Friars Minor who should pass through San Saloni, and furnish them with whatsoever they might require, as far

(57) The law of Moses allowed grapes to be eaten in a neighbouring vineyard, but not to be carried away; and we see in the Gospel that the disciples of Jesus Christ being hungry, and passing through cornfields, gathered the ears and ate them. Deuter. xxiii. 24, 25, and Math. xii. 1.

as his means would allow ; which he never failed to do as long as he lived. Francis, in return, granted him participation in all the spiritual merits of his order, and gave him the name of father of the Friars Minor.

It is from this precedent that the superiors of the order give letters of filiation, as they are called, in virtue of which the holders participate in the merits of all the practices of the community. This is grounded on the communion of saints, one of the articles of the apostolic symbol by which each member of the faithful who is not excommunicated, and principally if he be in a state of grace, participates in the good works of others.(58) Besides this general communication, the faithful may assist each other by their prayers, and their own merits, as is done in confraternities and all pious associations. This is the way in which the order of St. Francis, and all other religious orders manifest their gratitude to their benefactors ; in this they do that which St. Augustine says of the ministers of Jesus Christ in regard to the faithful who support them ; "They give spiritual things, and only receive temporal ones ; they give gold, and only receive grass."(59) Those who know what the communion of saints is, and who neglect nothing which can contribute to their salvation, have great esteem (as indeed they ought) for letters of filiation, and strive to live in

(58) S. Amb. de Offic. lib. 1, c. 29. St. August. in Joan. Tract 32, n. 7 and 8.

(59) Id. Serm. 3, in Psalm 103, n. 9.

a Christian-like manner in order to profit by them.

From Catalonia, Francis continued his route through Rousillon, and it is believed that he placed some of his religious at Perpignan, the capital. He then entered Languedoc, which the errors and arms of the Albigenses had alike tended to desolate. The Catholics (60) at that time enjoyed some calm by the valour of the illustrious Simon, Count of Montford, who had just overthrown the heretics, principally by the celebrated victories obtained at Muret over Peter, king of Arragon, whom ill-understood interests had made protector of the Albigenses, to the detriment of religion, and who was killed in that battle. The saintly traveller did not make any stay in Languedoc; perhaps because it was the field destined by Providence to be cultivated by St. Dominic, whose preaching and miracles had made an infinity of conversions, and who was then at Carcassonne, where he gave the nuptial benediction to the marriage of Amaury de Montfort, the son of Simon, with the Princess Beatrice, the daughter of the Dauphin, Count of Viennois. Francis arrived at Montpellier at the time when they were about to open the council, at which Simon of Montford was loaded with praises, and chosen to be possessor of the city of Toulouse, and the other conquests of the Crusaders; he preached there, and foretold that a convent would be built there for his brethren in the hospital where he

(60) See the History of the Crusades against the Albigenses by Father Langlois of the Society of Jesus 1703.

lodged; a prophecy which was fulfilled in the year 1220.

His bad health, the fatigues of his journey, and the rigour of the season, had brought him into a state of great languor, and compelled him to stop one day. His malady gave him a disgust for all sorts of meat, and he thought that he could only relish some wild fowl. As he was speaking of it to his companion Bernard, a well-appointed cavalier brought him one ready dressed, saying, "Servant of God, take what the Lord sends thee," after which he disappeared. Francis admiring the goodness of God, who fulfils the desires of those who fear Him, (61) ate willingly of this celestial food, and was so strengthened by it, that he rose up immediately and continued his journey through Dauphiny and Piedmont; from whence he went to St. Mary of the Angels, continuing to perform the functions of an apostle and patriarch of the order on his way, but not without having to endure the honours which his miracles and the reputation of his sanctity procured him from all parts.

His return was the subject of great rejoicing to his children, to Clare in particular, and to a number of young men, among whom were many nobles and many learned persons who were waiting to be received into the order.

He was surprised to find a building which Peter of Catania, his vicar, had had constructed during his absence; he enquired the reason of it, and

(61) Ps. cxliv. 19.

Peter having replied, "that it was for the accommodation of their guests, where they might say the divine office more commodiously." "Brother Peter," he said, "this place is the rule and the model of the order; I choose that those who come to it shall suffer, as well as those who live in it, the inconveniences of poverty, in order that they may tell others how poorly we live at St. Mary's of the Portiuncula; for if the guests see that they are lodged in commodious buildings, and that they are provided with everything they can wish for, they will expect the same thing in their provinces, and will say, that they only do as they do at Portiuncula, which is the original place of the institution." He was desirous that the building should be pulled down, and he even directed it to be done; but upon the representations of the need they had of it, he consented to let it stand. They could not do without room to lodge the number of people who were drawn thither by the rumour of his great virtues, and the multitudes of his religious who came from various parts to consult him.

Those whom he had destined for Mount Alvernia, having come with several others to congratulate him on his return, informed him that Count Orlando had loaded them with favours; that they were settled on the mountain, and that it was the place of all others proper for contemplation. This gave him a wish to go thither, and he set out with three companions, Leo, Massé, and Angelus of Rieti. It was his custom in travelling to name one of those who accompanied him, as guar-

dian and leader, and he obeyed him humbly in all things. On this occasion he gave this commission to Massé, desiring him not to disquiet himself about their food, and giving no other instructions, except that the divine office should be punctually and piously recited, that silence should be rigidly observed, and that their deportment should be reserved. He preached as usual wherever he went, and performed many miracles, the principal of which will be spoken of hereafter.

One night he went into a church which was deserted, in order to pass the night in prayer, knowing from experience that the Spirit of God was communicated more freely to the soul in quiet solitary places. At the beginning of the night the devils used every sort of artifice to interrupt his prayers and to disturb him. Then they attacked him in person, as St. Athanasius relates that they did Saint Anthony, (62) so that they seemed to come to blows with him. The more they annoyed him, the more fervently he prayed, and the more strenuously he invoked Jesus Christ with confidence, in the words of the prophet:—"Protect me under the shadow of thy wings from these wicked ones who pursue me;" (63) and he said to the devils:—"Spiteful and deceitful spirits, do all you can against me, for you can do nothing but what God permits, and here I am, ready to suffer with pleasure all the afflictions it is His pleasure to send me." Then the devils cast themselves upon him with still greater violence; they pushed

(62) S. Athan. vit. S. Anton. n. 5.

(63) Ps. xvi. 10.

him about on all sides, they dragged him along the ground and beat him severely. In the midst of his sufferings, he exclaimed :—"My Lord Jesus Christ, I give Thee thanks for all Thy benefits ; this is not one of the least ; it is an assured mark of the goodness Thou hast for me. Thou punishest my sins in this world, to spare me in the next. My heart is ready, O my God, my heart is ready to suffer still more if such be Thy holy will." St. Bonaventure says, that he was often tormented in this manner by demons ; but that these proud spirits not being able either to overcome him, or to bear his constancy, retired in confusion. Such a resistance would repress all the efforts of the tempter when he attacks us invisibly.

In the morning he could not disguise from his companions what had happened to him, and the extreme weakness which it had brought on obliged him to desire his companions to go to the neighbouring village, to procure him, for the love of God, some means of riding on with them. The farmer to whom they applied, having learnt that it was for Francis of Assisi, of whom he had heard so much good spoken, went to fetch his own ass to carry him on, on his mission.

On the way, Francis bethought himself of stopping for a short time at this farmer's, to recruit his strength by some poultry and other delicacies of the country ; but wishing to punish himself for having merely listened to such a suggestion, he took up a half-rotten fowl from a dunghill, and smelt at it, saying to himself :—"Here, glutton !

here is the flesh of the poultry that you so anxiously wished for; satisfy your longing, and eat as much as you like." To support himself, he ate nothing but bread, on which he sprinkled ashes, and he drank nothing but water. He blessed the house of his host, and promised him very long lineage, who should be neither poor nor rich, and who should have conveniently all the necessaries of life. The remembrance of this prediction has been carefully preserved in this place, and the house still exists, bearing the name of St. Francis, where the religious of his order are always charitably received. This is what is taught by the apostle:—"That God, by His blessing, gives to charitable persons the means of continuing and multiplying their good works. (64)

The invalid was replaced on the ass, and they took the road to Chiusi which they reached by noon. Count Orlando was greatly pleased to see them, and would have been but too glad to detain them, if only for that day; but Francis would go as soon as dinner was done to Mount Alvernia, whither the count accompanied him.

The mountain Alvernia is on the confines of Tuscany, not far from Camaldoli, and Val Ombrosa; it is part of the Apennines, (65) and it

(64) 2 Cor. ix. 8, et seq.

(65) Apennines is the common name which is given to the long chain of mountains, which begins on the coasts of Genoa, and bending to the South, runs through the whole of Italy till it reaches the straits which separate Sicily from the mainland. The Apennine is called by Virgil, Pater Apenninus, either because it commands several vast forests, or because many rivers flow from it, or because its mountains are the highest in Italy.

rises higher than the adjacent mountains from which it is separated: two rivers flow at its foot, the Tiber and the Arno. On their sides it has rocks so perpendicular and so smooth that they might be mistaken for walls; and on the side on which the top may be reached, no one would dare to attempt the ascent but for the number of beech trees and underwood which hide the precipices. These trees, which are very lofty, hide some extensive and beautiful pasturages. There was also there abundance of the plant called carline or caroline, (66) which is a cure for the plague.

The farmer, who was their guide, made bold to address him as follows: "Brother, I hear much good spoken of you, and I understand that God has shown you great favours, for which you are greatly indebted to Him: strive then to be what it is said you are, and never to change in order that those who have confidence in you may not be deceived; this is a piece of advice I give you." Francis, delighted at what he heard, dismounted, kissed the man's feet, thanked him, acknowledging the great mercy of God, who had been pleased to cast His eyes on the lowliness of His servant. Although this advice came from a poor countryman, it was nevertheless the very best that could be given to a saint. So true it is that no one should be despised, and that the most simple-minded persons often say more sensi-

(66) It is the white Chamelian, or Carline thistle; because it is believed that this plant was shown the Emperor Charlemagne by an angel, to cure his army of the plague. Wading, ad ann. 1213.

ble and more spiritual things than men of the greatest genius.

The same man being very thirsty at the steepest part of the mountain, exclaimed loudly: "I shall die, if I cannot get something to drink." Francis immediately alighted, threw himself on his knees, raised his hands to heaven, and prayed until he knew that he had been heard. Then pointing out a large stone to the man, he said, "Go there quickly, and you will find some living water: it is Jesus Christ who, out of His great mercy, makes it spring from this rock that you may drink." The man ran directly, found water, and drank as much as he required. No spring had ever been known to be in that place, and no water was ever found there afterwards. Wonderful goodness of the Almighty, exclaims St. Bonaventure, who thus with so much benevolence grants the prayers of His servants.

At length they reached the top of Mount Alvernia, where the religious resided. The father was well pleased with their dwelling, because everything was on a small scale and poor. Count Orlando returned in the evening and came back next day bringing something for their dinner. After they had finished their meal he gave orders for the construction of a small chapel under a very tall beech tree, and a cell, which Francis had asked him for, and calling the others aside, he said: "Since your founder has given his consent to the donation I made you two years ago of this mountain, you may consider it as yours, and hence both myself and mine will be always

devoted to your service whenever you shall need it. You will not be able to please me more than by addressing yourselves to me, looking upon me as your servant; and even, if you will do me that favour, considering me as one of your brethren." After the departure of the count, the holy patriarch made them the following discourse, relative to the count's kindness, which they took care to commit to writing:

"My dear children, it is God who thus turns the hearts of the faithful towards His little and useless servants, in which He does us a very great favour. On what we have hitherto received let us place our hopes for what is to come; if that seems but little, the Lord, who is infinitely liberal, (67) will add to it by His goodness still greater benefits, provided we are faithful to Him. Let us then leave to Him the care of all that relates to you, (68) and He Himself will feed you, as He fed Elias, Paul, and Anthony in the desert. The birds of the air neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father nourishes them; (69) how much more will He do this for His servants? If He tries you, it will be only for a time, for it is written, that He will not suffer the just to waver for ever; the eyes of the Lord are on them that fear Him, and on them that hope in His mercy to deliver their souls from death and feed them in famine. Trust not to the princes of the earth, (70) nor to the

(67) 2 Reg. xii. 3. (68) Ps. liv. 25.
(69) Math. vi. 26. (70) Ps. xxxii. 8.

charitable offers made you by our benefactor Count Orlando, for cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm. (71) This lord has acted nobly by us, and according to His piety; let us do on our parts what depends on us, and fail not therein; that is to say, let us not have recourse to his generosity, as to a treasure of which we are the masters, and in that respect let us have the greatest reserve that we may not in any respect trench upon holy poverty. Be sure, my dear children, that our best resource for providing for our wants, is to have none to provide for. If we are truly evangelical poor, the world will have compassion upon us, and will generously give us all that is necessary for our subsistence; but if we swerve from holy poverty, the world will shun us; the illicit means which we might take for avoiding indigence, would only make us feel it the more." Is not such a discourse sufficient to show us, that St. Francis had great talents and judgment, joined to great knowledge of the practice of virtue?

Count Orlando had a church built in Mount Alvernia, according to the plan which the Saint had given him, which it was confidently said had been given to him by the Blessed Virgin, who appeared accompanied by St. John Baptist, and St. John the Evangelist.

While they were at work at this building and at the cells for the brethren, Francis explored the mountain on all its sides, to discover the sites

(71) Jer. xvii. 5.

best adapted for contemplation. He found one, where there were some large openings in the rock, great masses overhanging them, deep caverns, and frightful pits; and what seemed to him to be most curious, there was a rock so split that the interior formed a room with a smooth flooring, and a sort of ceiling which had a small opening which admitted the light. He was anxious to know whether this was the natural formation of the rock, or whether it was not the effect of an earthquake; and after having recited the seven penitential Psalms, he begged God to grant him information on this head. An angel acquainted him in an apparition that this had happened at the death of Jesus Christ, when the earth shook and the rocks were rent asunder. This circumstance gave Mount Alvernia additional value in the eyes of the servant of Jesus Christ crucified. He never afterwards saw these openings without thinking of the sufferings his Divine Master endured on the cross, (72) and without wishing that his feelings of compassion might break his heart. In the opinion of the holy Fathers, the rocks which were rent when Jesus Christ expired were reproaches to the Jews for the hardness of their hearts, and this reproach falls equally on Christians who are insensible to His sufferings. (73)

We can have no difficulty in thinking with Cardinal Baronius, that the rocks on mount Alvernia were split at the death of our Saviour, since the

(72) Math. xxvii. 51. (73) S. Hieron. in Amos, cap. 3.

earthquake was universal, according to the opinions of Eusebius, St. Jerome, and many others, and even according to the testimony of pagan authors.

It is also very credible that the Son of God has manifested to His special servants, some of the effects of this motion of the earth, in order to impress more vividly on their minds the remembrance of His passion: and may we not think that the Lord, who is the beholder of all ages, as the wise man says,(74) and who had selected mount Alvernia as the place in which He would do His servant Francis the favour of imprinting the stigmata on him, as we shall see further on, was pleased to give this mountain some resemblance to that of Calvary, where St. Cyril of Jerusalem assures us, that in his time the rents caused by the earthquake were seen?(75)

Among the masses of rock on mount Alvernia, there is one much more elevated and much larger than the rest, and which is separated from them by precipices, to which there is no access but by throwing a bridge across. There, as in an insulated citadel, a celebrated brigand had his stronghold, who was called the Wolf, on account of the plunder and murders he committed in the surrounding country, either by himself, or by the gang of which he was the chief. He often also, by means of a flying bridge, confined travellers in this place, whom he had surprised on the high roads, and whom he detained till their ransom was paid. The establishment of Francis and his brethren displeased him greatly, people of that sort

(74) Eccl. xxxvi. 19. (75 S. Cyril.

do not like having neighbours. He gave them several times notice to begone, and he threatened them should they not obey. Their great poverty gave them nothing to fear from thieves, but there was just cause for apprehending that the murderer might massacre them all. Divine Providence, however, saved them by a change which might well be called the work of the Most High.(76) The villain came one day determined upon expelling them, and used the most atrocious language to them. Francis received him with so much mildness, listened to him with so much patience, and induced him by degrees to hear reason, so that his anger entirely fell, and he not only consented to their remaining, but he begged that they would admit him into their poor dwelling. He witnessed during several days their angelic mode of life, and he became so changed, that he determined upon adopting a similar plan. The Saint perceiving that from a ravenous wolf he was become a gentle lamb, gave him the habit of the order, and the name of Brother Agnello, under which he expiated his crimes by religious penance, of which he rigidly fulfilled all the duties. This fact was of such notoriety, that the rock to which he used to retire has always been called since, and is still known by the name of Brother Wolf's prison.

All things being put in order at Mount Alvernia, he left it to go to Rome. He passed through Monte Casale, Fabriano, Osimo, Ancona, Macerata,

(76) Ps. lxxvi. 10.

Ascoli, Camerino, and many other places, preaching in all the truths of salvation, gaining disciples, founding houses for his order, prophesying and working miracles; we shall only put on record here the most remarkable, and those that are most edifying.

God favoured him, as He had done St. Ambrose, with power of discovering relics which were hidden. He knew by revelation that there were some in a certain church(77) in which he had prayed, and some business calling him away from thence, he communicated the circumstance to his brethren, desiring them to take them from thence and place them in a more suitable situation; but they either through forgetfulness or neglect did not do so. One day as they were preparing the altar for Mass, they found under the altar-cloth some beautiful bones, from which a sweet perfumed smell issued, and they immediately recollected that these were the relics of which their father had spoken. At his return he enquired whether they had been disinterred, and the religious, having told him exactly what had occurred, he said: "Blessed be the Lord my God, who of His goodness has done what you ought to have done out of obedience;" but he imposed a penance upon them in expiation of their fault. At the monastery of Monte Maggiore, a joy and interior consolation which he felt on entering the church, made him sensible that the high altar contained something which had been used by the Blessed Virgin.

(77) Paulin. in vit. S. Ambros.

(78) He spoke of it to the religious, who searched narrowly, and found that it was true. In ecclesiastical history we find that God had often caused the relics of His saints to be discovered, in order to do them honour, and the holy Fathers have taught the faithful to venerate them. There are only heretics who have been capable of treating them with contempt and profaning them; they are for the children of the church a tender object of devotion, and a pledge of the Divine protection.

While he was preaching at Fabriano in the middle of the market-place, some workmen who were employed at a palace made so much noise, that it prevented his being heard. Having entreated them to be quiet for a short time, to which they paid no attention, he said that the work of those who were building the house would be of no use, because the Lord did not build it, but that it would soon fall; however, that neither man nor beast would be injured by it; and this happened but a few days after it had been finished, as he had foretold. He assured the people at the same town, that at a place called the Poor Valley, his brethren, who were poor, would some day have a habitation. And in fact, in the year 1292, the town of Fabriano placed Friars Minor there.

Among the most considerable establishments which he placed on his route, was that of St. Mary of the Stony Valley, so called from its being situated in a very rocky valley, between two moun-

(78) S. Chrys. Homil. 26.

tains, four miles distant from Fabriano. It was a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, with a monastery, which the religious of St. Benedict had abandoned in order to take refuge in the town, on account of the wars, and it is one of the most beautiful solitudes of all Italy. Devotion to the Mother of God, and the love of retreat, had induced Francis to ask for this place ; and it was given him by those who were its proprietors. The first time he went there, he lost his way, with his companion, and asked a ploughman to take him to the valley. "What," says the man, "shall I leave my plough and lose my time, to serve you?" However, he took him to the place, mollified by Francis' mildness, and by his promising him that he should be no loser by so doing ; on returning after receiving the Father's blessing, he found his field quite ploughed.

Some workmen who were employed repairing a house which had been given him, at a place called Trabé Bonata, being very tired, asked him to give them some wine. He sent two of his brethren to procure some in a neighbouring village, from some charitable benefactor ; but the workmen being very urgent, out of compassion for them he went to a spring, made the sign of the cross over it, and in an instant, instead of water, wine issued from it, which flowed for a whole hour. Those who drank of it published in all places the miraculous effect of the Saint's charity.

In a parish called La Città, he was very well received by the Curate, whose name was Raniero,

with whom he became very intimate, so that he was in the habit of visiting him, and going to confession to him. One day after confession he gave him, in a very humble manner, notice, that he, the Curate, would become one of his brethren, because they had become too closely united to live different kinds of lives: "But," he said, "this will not happen till after my death." The event verified the prediction: as soon as the Curate learnt that his friend Francis shone by an infinity of miracles, and was just canonized, he entered the order of Friars Minor, and adhered to the rules with great regularity.

The holy man coming to Osimo, he was met, notwithstanding his great humility, and brought into the town with great honours. The next day he preached on the vanity of the world, in so persuasive a strain, that all his hearers, penetrated with compunction, turned their thoughts seriously to their reformation, and thirty young men entered his Institute.

In the same journey, he and his companion lodged at the house of a gentleman, the greatness of whose soul equalled the antiquity of his nobility, and whose politeness was joined to piety. The welcome he received there was followed by this open-hearted proffer: "Man of God," he said, "I place my person at your disposal, and all that I possess, all is yours, do as you please with it; if you want clothing, or a cloak, or books, or whatever it may be, take it, and I will pay for it. Be assured that I am wholly at your service. God has given me wealth; I have wherewithal to

assist the poor, and it is but just that I do not fail in so doing."

Francis merely at the time contented himself with making those grateful acknowledgments which so handsome and obliging an offer required; but when he left him, he could not refrain from admiring the generosity of this gentleman, and he said to his companion: "Indeed, brother, he would be an excellent subject for our order; he is humbly thankful for what he has received from God; he loves his neighbour very sincerely; he gives willingly to the poor; and he exercises hospitality from his heart; he is extremely affable and polite; and politeness is sister to charity; it puts down contention and promotes concord; he is naturally benevolent; and this feeling is highly pleasing to our Father who is in heaven, who causes the sun to rise on the good and on the wicked.(79) So many excellent qualities which I see in this young man, make me wish to have him to be one of us, and I should admit him with pleasure. We must pay him another visit, and exhort him to devote himself to the service of God; perhaps the Holy Ghost may incline him to do so; meanwhile let us implore the Lord to grant our wish, if He judges it right." In fact they did pray for this purpose.

Some days afterwards they returned to this person's house, who had the curiosity to watch what Francis did in the night; he saw him in prayer, and in an ecstasy raised from the ground,

(79) Math. v. 45.

and surrounded by a splendid light, and he felt interiorly a certain celestial fire, which inspired him with an ardent desire to imitate his mode of life. In the morning he communicated his feelings to the saint, who was already made aware of them by revelation, and who thanked the Giver of all good gifts for them. The postulant gave all he had to the poor, took the habit of a Friar Minor, and lived holily; preserving always the same affable and polite manners, with which he received the guests of the convents in which he resided, which endeared him still more to the patriarch, who was very zealous in the exercise of hospitality. The duties of hospitality, lauded by the pagans, taught by the Gospel, enforced by the Apostles, and all the holy Fathers, are exercised in the order of St. Francis with so much the more care, as being totally dependent on charity, they consider themselves bound to give all in the same manner, and they apply to themselves these words of the Son of God to the Apostles, on the gift of miracles: "Freely you have received, freely give." (80) This is what draws down the blessing of God, and which makes so many houses subsist, without any revenue, by the charity of the faithful.

The holy patriarch of the Friars Minor arrived at Rome when everything was preparing for the opening of the Twelfth Œcumenical Council, the 4th of Lateran, one of the most numerous ever held in the church. (81) Innocent III. had con-

(80) Math. x. 8.
(81) Ursperg. ad ann. 1215.

voked it for the extinction of heresies, for the reformation of morals, for regulating the discipline of the church, and for the recovery of the Holy Land by the union of the Christian Princes.

Francis came to Rome to induce the Sovereign Pontiff to give a public approval to the Rule of his Order, which was of the highest importance in order that the Prelates might have it in their power to distinguish the poor of Jesus Christ, true children of the church, from certain sectaries of those times who affected, as has been already said, to bear the marks of apostolic poverty.

What the servant of God required was put in force ; the Pope declared before all the Fathers of the Council, that he approved the Order and the Rule of St. Francis,(82) although he had hitherto issued no Bull. This is a fact which is related by the companions of the Saint who wrote his life, and by two authors of the Order of St. Dominic, Jordan of Saxony, a disciple of that blessed patriarch, and St. Antoninus.(83) Moreover, in order to avoid too great a variety of religious

(82) Thus when the second general Council of Lyons, abolishing all orders instituted since the Lateran Council, declares that this does not extend to those of the Preachers and Minors, because of the services the Church receives from them, it sufficiently shows that it approves of them ; it means merely to imply that those two orders were only solemnly sanctioned by Bulls, subsequent to the Lateran Council. For as to the verbal approbation, it is certain that Innocent III. gave it in 1210 to the Minors, and S. Bonaventure expressly says so, and we shall see that Honorius III. also says so in the Bull which he issued in 1223, when he confirmed the rule. As to the order of Preachers, it was approved by Innocent III. at the Lateran Council in 1215, and confirmed at Rome in 1216 by the Bull of Honorius III.

(83) Jord de Sax. de vit. Frat, lib. 1, cap. 24. S. Anton. chron.

orders, the council prohibited the formation of any new ones, and directed that the existing ones should be considered sufficient, and it is clear that the Pope could not in this instance avoid making known the approbation he had given to an order so new and peculiar as was that of the Friars Minor, who in the last five years had spread over Italy, and was established in Rome.

The holy friendship which was subsequently formed between St. Dominic and St. Francis, renders it proper that we should here record that St. Dominic came also to this Lateran Council, together with Fulke, bishop of Toulouse, in order to propose to the pope an intention he had of instituting an order of preachers, and (84) that the pope had seen in a dream St. Dominic supporting the Lateran church, which was falling, in the same way as he had seen Francis supporting it five years before. He praised his undertaking, but told him, according to the decree of the council, to return with his brethren, and prepare a rule for the guidance of the order, and then come back to have the order confirmed, which the holy patriarch complied with.

The Council of Lateran having terminated its labours, (85) Francis left Rome at the beginning of December to return to St. Mary of the Angels, after having sent circular letters to the houses of the order, convoking the general chapter, which

(84) Jord de Sax. MS. cap. 20, 21, and 22. Theod. ad Appold. vit. S. Domin.

(85) The Council sat twenty days; from the feast of S. Martin to that of S. Andrew.

was to meet in that convent at Whitsuntide of the following year.

When he had reached his convent, Clare, who being very humble, had accepted only through obedience the quality of abbess of St. Damian, wished to throw it up into his hands, to which he would by no means assent, because he knew that by the disposition of Divine Providence, she was to form the disciples who were to establish his order in various places, from whence it was to spread throughout the church.

Clare had admitted many virgins during the three years she had presided over St. Damian, among whom were some of her own relatives. Beatrice, the youngest of her sisters, came a short time afterwards ; and Hortolona, her mother, as soon as she became a widow, decided upon consecrating herself to God, with her three daughters, in the same monastery, where miracles testified to the holiness of her life. Finally, the virtues of Clare were so resplendent, and the miracles which it pleased the Almighty to work by her means, threw so much splendour around her, that according to the remark of Pope Alexander IV., in the bull of her canonization, (86) the truth of the prediction which was made to her mother, was clearly seen :—"That she would give to the world a light which would even enlighten the world." The sequel of the life of the father, will afford further opportunity for speaking of the daughter.

The Benedictines of Mount Soubazo, in this

(86) Bollar. Rom. tom. I.

year, gave the holy Patriarch a convent on this very mountain, two miles from Assisi. It has been called the prison of St. Francis, because he often shut himself up there in contemplation after his apostolical labours. His oratory is still seen there: his cell, the stone and the wood which served him for bed and pillow, and a copious spring which, by his intercession, he obtained from God.

From the beginning of the following year, 1216, to the 30th of May, the festival of Whitsuntide, the day on which the general chapter was held, which was the first (87) of the order, he had as much leisure as he could desire for conversing with God, for giving instruction to his brethren at Saint Mary of the Angels, and to the town of Assisi and its environs. In the assembly, provincial ministers were appointed, to whom power was given for admitting postulants into the order; which the founder had previously reserved to himself. One whose name does not appear, was sent into Apulia, but John de Strachia was sent into Lombardy; Benedict of Arezzo into the Marches of Ancona; Daniel the Tuscan into Calabria; Augustin of Assisi into the Terra di Lavoro; Elias of Cortona into Tuscany. Evangelical labourers were chosen for different nations. Bernard de Quintavalle for Spain; John Bonella, a Florentine, with thirty companions, for Provence; John de Penna, and sixty of his brethren, for Upper and

(87) This is what Wading proves against those who assert that the general chapter of 1219, called the Chapter of the Beads, was the first. Ad ann. 1216, n. 1.

Lower Germany; Francis took for his share Paris, and what is properly called France and the Low Countries.

Those who were destined for distant countries were not dissatisfied, each one went to the department allotted to him with pleasure, as if it had been that of his own choice. This was a proof of their virtue, and a favourable omen for the combats they were about to have with the devils, because obedience alone carries off the palm, (88) according to the words of the Scripture; and that in the opinion of the holy fathers, those who for the love of God submit their will to the will of others, are conquerors to whom it is given to exercise great authority over the fallen angels, whose degradation was brought about by disobedience and rebellion.

The apostolic labourers being all assembled at the feet of their father, to receive his orders, he addressed them with paternal tenderness, in the following discourse:—

"In the Name of the Lord, go forth modestly, two and two, observing strict silence from the morning till after the hour of Tierce, praying to God from your hearts. Let no idle or useless words be heard among you; although you are travelling, your deportment should be as humble and as decorous as if you were in a hermitage, or in your cells. For wherever we are, and, whithersoever we may be going, we have always our voca-

(88) Prov. xxi. 28.

(89) S. August. in Ps. lxx. serm 2, n. 7.

tion with us; our brother the body is our cell, and the soul is the hermit, who dwells in it to think of God and to pray to Him. If a religious soul does not dwell quietly in the cell of the body, the external cells will be of little use to him. Behave then in such manner in the world, that whosoever may see or hear you, may be moved to devotion, and praise our Heavenly Father, to whom alone all glory belongs. Proclaim peace to all men, but have it in your hearts as well as in your mouths. Give to no one cause for anger, nor for scandal; on the contrary, by your own mildness induce every one to feel benignly, and draw them to union and to concord. We are called to heal the wounded, console the afflicted, and to bring back those who err; many may seem to you to be members of the devil, who will one day be disciples of Jesus Christ." What Francis said of the inutility of exterior cells, where the soul is not at ease in the cell of the body, is in conformity to these words of Saint Bernard: (90)—"You may be alone when you are in the midst of the world, as it may so happen that you may be in the midst of the world when you are alone." (91)

The children of the holy patriarch received his blessing; and having recommended themselves to the prayers of their companions, they set out for

(90) Many beautiful things on this head may be seen in the letter to the Carthusians of Mont Dieu, attributed to S. Bernard, but which Mabillon thinks was written by William Abbot of S. Thierry near Rheims. This sentence is found in it: "Cum quo Deus est, nunquam minus solus est, quam cum solus est." Oper. S. Bernard, tom. 5, Epis. ad Frat. de Monte Dei. cap. 1.

(91) Serm. 40, in Cant. n. 5.

those places to which obedience sent them. The success of the several labours will be adverted to further on. The missionaries for Provence remained some days after the breaking up of the chapter, to receive further instructions relative to their mission. The day of their departure, there were only three loaves of bread in the convent, two of which had been sent there by Clare; these were found sufficient for more than thirty who were there, and there was a great deal to spare, a circumstance which was considered to be a good omen.

Francis, having animated all the others by his zeal, prepared himself for setting out for Paris. Besides the natural affection he had for France, of which he liked the language as it was familiar to him, he chose this city preferably to many others, because he knew that their devotion was great towards the blessed sacrament, and this was a great attraction for his piety.

May the Parisians ever entertain and transmit to their posterity this fervent devotion of their ancestors, which Pope Urban IV., (92) who was a native of France, stirred up in the hearts of the faithful forty-six years afterwards, by the institution of the Feast of the Most Holy Sacrament, which is celebrated throughout the church, with so much solemnity. The bull which he issued on this occasion, enters into the strongest and most moving arguments calculated to inspire veneration, love, and the zeal which the precious memorial of

(92) Bullar Rom. tom. 1, An. 1262.

the goodness of the Son of God calls for, and to invite to a frequent and worthy participation in the divine mystery, which the Council of Trent has since expressed its anxiety to see re-established. (93)

Before his departure Francis undertook to reconcile the members of the illustrious family of the Baselennesi, a long time disunited by unhappy family dissensions, and he succeeded to the satisfaction of all parties. Out of gratitude they had built for him, on one of their estates on a spot near the Tiber, surrounded with very beautiful trees, a convent called St. Angel of Pantanellis.

He chose to go once more to Rome to recommend to the Holy Apostles his journey to France. On the road, having seated himself close to a spring to take his meal, he put some pieces of bread, which had been given to him on his quest, and which were very hard and mouldy, on a stone near him; he expressed much satisfaction, and he pressed his companion Massé to give thanks to God for so great a treasure; and he repeated several times the same thing, elevating his voice more and more. "But of what treasure are you talking," said Massé, "at a time when we are in want of many things?" "The great treasure is," replied Francis, "that being in want of so much, God has had the goodness to furnish us by His Providence with that bread and this spring, and to find us this stone to serve as a table."

(93) Sess. 13, cap. 3, and Sess. 22, cap. 6.

He went shortly after into a church, where he prayed to God to give him and his children the love of holy poverty; and his prayer was so fervent that fire seemed to issue from his countenance. Full of this celestial ardour, he went towards Massé with open arms, calling him by name with a loud voice; Massé, in great astonishment, going to throw himself into the arms of his Father, was raised into the air several cubits high, and felt such sweetness in his soul, that he frequently afterwards declared that he had never experienced anything like it. After this ecstasy Francis spoke to him on the subject of poverty in an admirable strain, which we shall relate hereafter.

When at Rome, in a chapel of the church of St. Peter, while he was praying with tears that the holy Apostles would give him instructions on the subject of holy poverty and of an apostolic life, they appeared to him surrounded by lights, and after tenderly embracing him, said: "Brother Francis, our Lord Jesus Christ has sent us to tell you that He has favourably heard your prayers and tears on the subject of holy poverty, which He Himself had followed, as well as His Blessed Mother, and we, who are His Apostles, after His example. This treasure is granted to you for yourself and for your children, those who shall carefully adhere to it, will have the kingdom of heaven for their reward." The servant of God, filled with consolation, went to his companion Massé, to whom he communicated what had passed, and they went together to give thanks

at the place which is called the Confession of St. Peter, which is his tomb.

While Francis was at Rome Pope Innocent III. died at Perugia.(94) He was of the illustrious house of the Counts of Segni, which has given five Popes to the Church, the last of whom was Innocent XIII. of blessed memory. It was at the University of Paris that his merit was first noticed; he shone there above the many who were its honour and its ornament. It was his rare and transcendant qualities which induced the cardinals unanimously to elect him to the Pontificate; and these qualities shone with additional splendour when his humility urged his resistance to the election, from which he prayed, with unaffected tears, to be released. His government and the works he has left to posterity, show that he had great genius, great science, prudence, and probity, with solid piety and ardent zeal. "He was," says a French contemporary writer, "a man of great courage and great wisdom, who had no equal in his day, and who did marvellous things." (95) He was indeed one of the most eminent men who have filled the chair of St. Peter. The affection he bore to Francis, and the favours he conferred on his order, have compelled us to do this justice here to his memory, which no good author has refused him. (96)

(94) He died on the 16th of July, after having held the keys sixteen years six months and nine days.

(95) Rigord. tom. 5, Hist. Franc. Script. page 66.

(96) There is only Math. Paris who has ventured to calumniate this great Pope. But he is a writer whose credit is very low with

On the 18th of July, they elected for his successor Cardinal Savelli, who took the name of Honorius III. He was a learned and worthy man. He generally followed the designs of his predecessor, and had a similar affection for the religious orders, of which he gave substantial proofs in the favours he bestowed on that of St. Francis.

Some months after his election he gave his approval of the Order of St. Dominic. This holy patriarch having returned to his companions, to fix upon a rule, as had been recommended to him by Pope Innocent at the Lateran Council, and having adopted the rule of St. Augustine, to which he had added some more austere regulations, came back to Rome to procure the approval of the Holy See. While he solicited it from Honorius, who had arrived from Perugia, he made acquaintance and contracted an intimacy with Francis, in consequence of a miraculous vision which he had in the church of St. Peter, where he prayed unceasingly with great fervour for the success of his enterprise.

He saw the Son of God seated on the right hand of His Father, who rose up greatly irritated against sinners, holding three darts in His hand,

equitable men, in consequence of the malignant and inveterate hostility he evinces against all the Popes, which renders him on this head unworthy of belief. The work of this calumniator has only been quoted by Protestants in order to give support to their invectives against the Holy See. See Baronius ad ann. 396, n. 62. One is disgusted at finding in an Ecclesiastical History, written in the vulgar tongue, the atrocious and false accusations of Math. Paris against the memory of the great and holy Pope Innocent III., and this is not the only part of the history alluded to that excites indignation.

for the extirpation of the proud, the avaricious, and the voluptuous. His holy Mother threw herself at His feet, and prayed for mercy, saying that she had persons who would remedy the evil; and she at the same time introduced to Him Dominic and Francis, as being proper persons for reforming the world, and re-establishing piety; this pacified Jesus Christ. (97)

Dominic, who had never seen Francis, met him next day, recognised him, ran to him and embraced him, saying: "You are my companion; we will work in concert with each other; let us be strictly united, and no one will be able to master us." Francis himself communicated this favour of Heaven to the children of Dominic: and St. Vincent Ferrer and some other authors, quoted by Wading, say that Francis had received a similar favour from Heaven. (98) The event proved the truth of the vision. Dominic alone, without any human aid, having nothing to command success but poverty, humility, and prayer, obtained the approbation of his order, which was an affair of great difficulty, particularly at the commencement of a Pontificate, when the Pope is occupied by most important affairs.

We may here notice the ground-work of the ardent zeal of the Friars Preachers, and the Friars Minor for the glory of the Mother of God. Persuaded that their orders were established under her protection, and that she is especially

(97) Theodor. ab Appold. in vit. S. Dominic. lib. 2, cap. 1.

(98) S. Anton. chron. part 3, lib. 23, cap. 3, Wad. ad ann. 1216, n. 16, Bzov. supra, Bullar. Rom. tom. 1, Honor. 3. S. Iren. lib. 3.

the mother of their holy patriarchs; they strive by every means in their power to restore the devout veneration due to her. It is the common interest of all the faithful, who see that she is, according to the expression of the holy Fathers, their advocate and their mediatrix; that she prays and solicits for them, that she interposes between them and the wrath of her Son, and appeases Him: this affords great room for confidence in her, and should induce them to invoke her for their conversion and sanctification.

Dominic and Francis, confident of the protection of the Blessed Virgin, entered into a strict friendship, and resolved to spare no pains in their exertions for the glory of God, and concerted together as to the best means for attaining their object.(99) Upon which, an author,

(99) In the circular letter which Humbert, general of the Friars Preachers, and John of Parma, general of the Friars Minor, addressed to the two orders in 1255, and which was adopted in the following year by S. Bonaventure, in which the two patriarchs are praised by beautiful comparisons taken from Scripture, we read these affecting words: "Consider, dear brethren, with what sincerity you are bound to love each other; you whom our holy mother the Church brought forth at the same time; you whom similar engagements constitute real brothers; you, whom the goodness of God has equally destined from all eternity to undertake the same work, which is the salvation of souls. O what charity, what concord do not our sainted Fathers Dominic and Francis, and the first religious of our orders, require from us, they who loved each other so tenderly, and gave each other such proofs of it; who looked upon each other as angels, loaded each other with civilities, aided each other, as Jesus Christ has aided us all, shared in the common progress of the orders, praised and assisted each other, and took the greatest care to avoid the smallest thing likely to give the slightest scandal or annoyance to either order." All the letter is in a similar style, and it loses nothing of its beauty after five centuries, and is calculated to make as much impression now on the religious as when first sent. Chron. Prædic. Wading, Annal. Min. ad an. 1216.

quoted by Wading, makes a most appropriate reflection: (100) "It was," he says, "something admirable to see two men, who were poor, badly clad, without power or interest, despicable in the eyes of the world, divide between them the world itself, and undertake to conquer it. Who would not have turned into ridicule hearing them seriously consult together on such an undertaking, which they seemed to have so little means of carrying into execution? Nevertheless they succeeded; because what is weak and powerless in the eyes of the world, God selected by their means to confound what is strong." (101) It is a resemblance of St. Peter and St. Paul, proposing to themselves, in the same city of Rome, to convert the universe by the preaching of the Gospel; and this shows, that God made use of similar means for reanimating the faith, to those which He had employed to establish it.

It is reported, that while Dominic and Francis were still at Rome, (102) Angelus, of the order of the Carmelites, who was afterwards martyred in Sicily, was also there; that preaching in the church of St. John Lateran, where the two others were among the hearers, he foretold that they would become two great pillars of the Church;

(100) Ferdinand. Castilio. apud. Wad. ad ann. 1126, n. 16.

(101) 1 Cor. 1, 27.

(102) The continuators of Bollandus find some chronological difficulties in the meeting of these holy personages, to which no satisfactory answer has been found, and which throw doubts upon it, so that it is not here given as certain.

that when the sermon was finished, they foretold to one another what would happen to each of them, and even that Francis would receive the stigmata; that the three together cured a man afflicted with leprosy, and passed a day and a night together in prayer and conversing on holy subjects.

Francis left Rome at the end of the year, intending to continue his journey into France. He passed through Sienna and by Mount Alvernia and arrived at Florence in the month of January, 1217, to pay his dutiful respects to Cardinal Ugolino, who was Papal Legate there. This cardinal, who had declared himself his protector and his friend, when he went to request the approbation of his rule from Pope Innocent III. in 1210, received him with great kindness, detained him some days, enquired into the affairs of his order, and said to him on the subject of his journey: "Francis, your order is still in its infancy. You know the opposition it met with in Rome, and you have still there some secret enemies; if there is not some one there to watch over your interests, it will be an easy matter to cause all you have obtained to be revoked. Your presence will go a great way in upholding your work, and those who are attached to you will have a greater stimulus for giving you their support. As to myself, I am from this moment wholly yours."

The holy man, after having thanked the cardinal, replied: "I have sent many of my brethren into far distant countries. If I remain

quietly in our convent, without taking any share in their labours, it will be a great shame for me; and these poor religious, who are suffering hunger and thirst, will have great reason to murmur and complain; but instead of that, if they find that I work as much as they do, they will bear their fatigues more willingly, and I shall more easily persuade them to undertake similar missions."

The Cardinal, feeling for the sufferings of these missionaries, said: "But why, brother, have you the harshness to expose your disciples to such arduous journeying and to so much suffering?" "My Lord," replied Francis, who was urged by a prophetic spirit, "you think that God has sanctioned the Institute for this country only; but I tell you that He has formed it for the good of the universe, and for the salvation of all men, without excluding the Infidels: for religious of this Order will go into their territories; and provided they live in conformity to the Gospel, God will provide amply for all their wants, even among the enemies of His name."

These words made a great impression on the Cardinal, who was a very holy man, and increased his affection for Francis, whom he again exhorted in stronger language than before, to remain in Italy to consolidate an Institute which was to have such beneficial results. The saint having yielded to the reasoning of the Cardinal, entreated him to be the protector of the Friars Minor, according to his promise, and to be so good as to be present at the next general chapter; after which he took the road to the valley of Spoleto.

There he learnt that some of his brethren had been seriously ill-treated by several prelates, and that at the court of Rome there were persons who spoke against his Order. This news confirmed him in the resolution he had taken to remain in Italy; and he named three of his disciples for the French mission, to wit: Pacificus of the Marches of Ancona, the celebrated poet, whose conversion we have related; Angelus, and Albert, both of Pisa.

He likewise intended to request the Pope to nominate a Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, to protect his order against all who should attack it. Three of his companions, the writers of his life, say, that he was induced to this by a celestial vision in his sleep. He saw a hen endeavouring to gather all her chickens under her wings, to protect them from a hawk; she could not cover them all, and many were about to become its prey; but another large bird appeared, spread its wings over them, and preserved them from the danger. On awaking, Francis prayed our Lord to explain to him the meaning of this, and he learnt that the hen represented himself, and the chickens were his disciples, that the bird with the large wings, represented the cardinal, whom they were to solicit for their protector. He told all this to his brethren, and addressed them as follows:—

"The Roman church is the mother of all the churches, and the sovereign of all religious orders. It is to her that I shall address myself to recommend to her my brethren, in order that her authority may silence those who are hostile to them,

and that she may procure for the children of God full and perfect liberty to advance quietly in the way of eternal salvation ;(103) for when they shall be under her protection, there will be no more enemies to oppose them, nor disturb them ; there will not be seen among them any son of Belial to ravage with impunity the vineyard of the Lord. The holy church will be zealous for the glory of our poverty ; she will not suffer that the humility which is so honourable to her, shall be obscured by the clouds of pride. It is she who will render indissoluble among us, the bonds of charity and peace, rigorously punishing the authors of dissensions. Under her eyes the holy evangelical observance will ever flourish in its pristine purity ; she will never permit these holy practices to flag, even momentarily, those practices which shed around them a vivifying odour. May the children then of that holy church be very grateful for the great favours which they receive from their mother, let them kiss her feet with profound veneration, and remain for ever inviolably attached to her."

The first words of this discourse shew that St. Francis was perfectly cognizant of the prerogatives of the church of Rome, and of the extent of the authority of the Holy See. It was not in vain that he sought her protection ; since his order was established, extended, supported, and sometimes even renovated under this powerful authority ; and the attachment to the Holy See, which he so

(103) 3 Reg. v. 4 ; Nahum, i. 15.

strongly recommended to his brethren, has been so visibly manifested during five centuries, that it has procured for them the esteem and love of all Catholics, as well as the hatred of the heretics, so that they have the honour of having some share in the eulogiums which St. Jerome passed on St. Augustine. "The Catholics esteem and respect you, and what enhances your glory, all the heretics detest you. They hold me in equal hatred; and if they durst not put both the one and the other of us to death, they have at least the wish to do so." (104) This wish of the heretics has not been without effect as regards the children of St. Francis, for of a thousand martyrs which they reckon in his order, a very great number of them were put to death with greater cruelty in this and latter times, by the sectarians than by idolatrous tyrants. Heresy will be ever so, the daughter of a parent, who, according to the words of Jesus Christ, was a murderer from the beginning. (105)

The holy patriarch went then to Rome, where he found Cardinal Ugolino, who was returned from Tuscany, to whom he communicated the intention he had of soliciting the pope for a protector. The cardinal at the same time expressed his wish to hear him preach before the pope and the sacred college. Francis excused himself from

(104) Macte virtute, in orbe celebraris. Catholici te conditorem antiquæ cursum fidei venerantur atque suspiciunt; et quod signum majoris gloriæ est, omnes hæretici detestantur; et me pari persequuntur odio, ut quos gladiis nequeunt voto interficiant. Hier. ad August.

(105) Joan. viii. 44.

this as much as he could, assigning for reasons, his ignorance, his simplicity, and his uncultivated mind, which unfitted him for speaking in the most august assembly in the world. But he was obliged to yield to the pressing instances of the cardinal, who entreated him as a friend to comply, and even ordered him to prepare himself for the task, recommending him to compose carefully a sermon wherein there should be as much erudition and reasoning as such an audience required.

Up to that time, the servant of God had never prepared himself for preaching, he only spoke from the pulpit what the Holy Ghost inspired. Nevertheless, he in this instance obeyed the cardinal; he prepared a sermon as carefully as he could, and learned it by heart. When he came into the presence of the Pope, he forgot every part of the discourse, and could not utter a syllable of it. But after having humbly explained the circumstance, and implored the aid of the Holy Ghost, words flowed copiously from his mouth, and he spoke with so much eloquence and animation, that the Pope and cardinal were deeply affected, in order, says St. Bonaventure, that it might be evident that it was not he who spoke, but the Spirit of God that spoke in him. (106)

Having been admitted to an audience of the Pope in presence of Cardinal Ugolino, he said: "Most holy Father, I am distressed at becoming importunate for the interests of your lowly servants the Friars Minor, while you are occupied

(106) Math. x. 20.

with so many important affairs which regard the whole Church. I entreat you to give us this Cardinal, to whom we may have recourse in our wants, always under your sanction, since it is from you, the Head of the mystical Body, that all power emanates." The Pope granted his request with alacrity, and recommended the Cardinal to take great care of the order. From that time, the Order of Friars Minor have always had a Cardinal Protector, whose powers are extended as the Pope shall see fit; the terms of the Rule, which oblige the Order by obedience to apply for one, show that it was the intention of Francis, that his powers should be most ample.

Cardinal Ugolino was one of the most accomplished men of the city of Rome; (107) his person well made, his countenance mild and majestic, his genius quick, with great memory and eloquence, possessing in perfection all human sciences, civil and canon law, and particularly the Holy Scriptures; he was very expert in all public business, a lover of virtue and order, and of a pure and exemplary life.

His first care in undertaking the office of Protector, which he did willingly, was to defend the Friars Minor against all those who attacked them, to conciliate the Prelates in their favour, and to spread them into all parts for the salvation of souls; his great authority silenced their enemies. As often as his affairs admitted of it, he assisted at their general chapters; when he officiated pontifically. Francis acted as his Deacon, and

(107) Cod. Vat. apud. Rayn. ad ann. 1217.

preached. He conformed to the rule of the Institute as much as was in his power, and was, when with them, as one of themselves, and even endeavoured to appear as the lowest among them.

A contemporary author, who was an ocular witness, expresses himself thus: "O how often has he been seen humbly to divest himself of the marks of his high dignity, put on the poor habit, and with bare feet join the religious in the regular exercises, in order to imitate their evangelical life!"(108) A lively and enlightened faith, a solid and fervent piety, and a superior mind, convinced him that since the time of the abasement of the Son of God, humiliation is honourable, and adds to the splendour of the highest dignities; a truth which is not understood by persons of little faith, by the proud, the indevout, and those of little mind.

This great Cardinal respected Francis as much as he loved him, looking upon him as a man sent down from heaven. His presence was a source of pleasure to him, and he often admitted, as the above-quoted author states, that from the time he had made acquaintance with this holy man, as soon as he saw him and heard him speak, all that caused in him uneasiness of mind, or grief at heart, was dispelled, his countenance became serene, and his soul was filled with fervour.

Francis, on his side, had great veneration for the Cardinal, whom he insisted on his brethren considering as the Pastor of the Flock, and with

(108) Tho. Celano apud. Wad. ad ann. 1217, n. 8.

an attachment as tender as that of an infant for the mother's breast, he gave him in all things marks of the profoundest deference. One day, hearing that he was about to receive a visit from him, he ran away and hid himself in the thickest part of the wood. The Cardinal had him sought for, and went himself in search of him, and having found him, asked him as his friend to tell him why he avoided him. "My Lord and my Father," answered the humble Francis, "as soon as I knew that your Grandeur (109) intended to honour me with your presence, me who am the poorest and the most despicable of men, I was covered with confusion, and I blushed at the thought of my baseness, finding myself wholly unworthy to receive so distinguished an honour, for I truly revere you, as my Lord and my Father." These feelings were partly owing to a vision he had had, which revealed to him that this Cardinal would be Pope; he foretold it to him, which is recorded by St. Bonaventure; and in the private letters which he wrote to him, he put on the heading: To my Reverend Father and Lord Ugolino, who is one day to be the Bishop of the whole world, and the Father of all nations. (110)

The respectful gratitude of the Friars Minor required that we should insert all these anecdotes

(109) The title of Eminence was only given to cardinals in 1630.

(110) S. Bernard had said a century before that the Pope was the Prince of Bishops, the Bishop of the world, the Pastor of pastors, that by a singular prerogative of the Apostolic See, he has a plenitude of power over all the churches; and to discover what is not confided to his care one must leave the world. Epist. 132, 139, and 210.

in memory of Cardinal Ugolino, who honoured the Holy Patriarch of his Order, as well as that of St. Clare, with his affection, his protection, and his liberality, and who surpassed all his former favours ten years afterwards, when he was Pope under the name of Gregory IX.

When Francis had obtained from the Pope so powerful a Protector, and had put his various affairs in order, he set out on his return to St. Mary of the Angels, but he spent the remainder of the year in the valley of Rieti, (111) where he performed many wonderful things, of which one of his companions has given a very ample account. (112)

At Grécio, or Grecchia, a very dissolute town in which he first preached, no one frequented the Sacraments, no one listened to the Word of God, and marriages within the prohibited degrees were of ordinary occurrence. What he said to them to urge them to repentance made such impressions on them, that they entreated him to make some stay among them. He willingly agreed to do so, in the hope of their conversion, which took place in a short time; meanwhile he retired to a mountain, from whence he came to Grécio and other places to preach.

On returning one day from Cotanello, a neighbouring town, and not being able to find the way to the mountain, he asked a farmer to be his

(111) Many think that it is the place called by Pliny, Umbilicus Italiæ, the description of which is in the seventh Book of the Æneid. Est locus Italiæ in medio sub montibus altis.

(112) Chron. M. S. Angeli. Reatini de rebus gestis a Sancto Francisco, in Valle Reatina Ap. Wading, ad ann. 1210, n 3.

guide. This man excusing himself, saying that there were wolves in that direction that committed great havoc, Francis promised him and pledged himself as his surety, that he should not be attacked by any wolf either in going or coming back; he found that the saint was correct, for in returning two wolves which were in the way, played with him as dogs do, and followed him to his house without doing him any harm. The farmer reported this over all his neighbourhood, and said that assuredly the man to whom he had served as guide, must be a great favourite with God, who gave him such absolute command over the wolves. Upon this they assembled in great numbers, and came to the Man of God, entreating him to deliver them from their calamities.

"Two sorts of calamities bore hard upon them," says St. Bonaventure, "wolves and hail." The wolves were so ravenous in the environs of Grécio, that they devoured both cattle and men; and the hail fell every year in such quantity and of such large size, that their crops of corn were destroyed, and their vineyards sorely damaged. Francis preached on this subject, and pointed out to them that scourges of this nature were the punishment of sin; and he ended by saying: "For the honour and for the glory of God, I pledge my word to you, that if you choose to give credit to what I say, and have pity on your own souls, by making a good confession, and showing worthy fruits of repentance, God will look upon you with a favourable eye, will deliver you from your calamities, and render your country abun-

dant in all sorts of good things. (113) But I also declare to you that if you are ungrateful for these benefits, if, like the dog, you return to the vomit, God will be still more irritated against you, and you will feel the effects thereof two-fold by the fresh afflictions He will send you." They believed the preacher, and did penance; from that moment the scourges ceased, nothing more was heard of wolves, and there was no more hail; and what was most remarkable, continues St. Bonaventure, was, that when it hailed in the vicinity, the cloud, on nearing their lands, either stopped or went off in another direction, to fall elsewhere. This lasted as long as they remained faithful to God.

Four authors, in different centuries, who have written the history of the Valley of Rieti, assure us, that when dissoluteness recommenced in that country, the wolves returned and made great havoc. (114) Wading, who wrote in Italy in the last century, says, that the inhabitants of the valley admitted this to be the case. It is certain by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, that the sins of the people call down not unfrequently the scourges of the wrath of God, which may be averted by repentance, or be rendered useful to salvation. But how many afflicted sinners are there of whom it may be said with the prophet, "O Lord, Thou hast struck them, and they have not grieved; Thou hast bruised them, and they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces

(113) Prov. xxvi. 11. (114) Ad ann. 1217, n. 13.

harder than the rock, and they have refused to return." (115)

A knight, whose name was John Velita, who was converted by the preaching of Francis, became his intimate friend, and used often to go to see him on the mountain in his hut, which was made of the branches of two large horn-beams intertwined. As he was an elderly man, and very corpulent, whom the steepness of the road greatly fatigued; he begged Francis to come nearer to the town, which would be agreeable to all, and he offered to build him a convent on any spot he should select. The servant of God assented to the proposal, and smiling, promised the knight not to settle farther from the town than the distance to which a child could throw a lighted brand. Upon this they went together down the mountain, and when they reached the gates of Grécio, the knight sent the first child he met to fetch a lighted brand, and desired him to throw it as far as he could, not thinking he could throw it very far. But the child, with a strength surpassing that of men, threw the brand to a distance of more than a mile, and it fell on a hill belonging to the knight, and set fire to the wood which covered it, and lit at length on a very stony spot. This prodigy made it clear that God desired that a convent should be built there, and it was cut out of the rock. The oratory, the dormitory, and the refectory, which are still extant, on the ground-floor, are only thirty feet long by

(115) Jerem. v. 3.

six broad; precious remains, which show us the love of poverty which planned them.

The saint founded three other establishments in the valley of Rieti, at St. Mary of the Woods, at Monte Raniero, or Monte Columba, and at Pui Buscone. These four houses, which are situated on eminences on the four sides of the valley, formed together a cross. In each of them, as in the town of Rieti, and all round the lake which surrounds it, (116) traces are shown of several miracles which were performed by the man of God.

He returned to St. Mary of the Angels in the month of January, 1218, and he determined upon convoking a general chapter, which he notified by circular letters, to be holden at Whitsuntide of the year 1219, in order that he might be made acquainted with the state of the missions entrusted to his disciples, and that he might send missionaries into parts where there had hitherto been none; this was an inspiration of the Holy Ghost, who pointed out to him the progress his order had already made, and the great good which would accrue to the Church by its universal extension.

While he was thus occupied by his important projects for the salvation of souls, God, in order to prevent any emotions of pride stealing into his heart, and to maintain therein a profound humility, was pleased to permit that he should be attacked by a violent temptation; it was an

(116) It is a small lake which empties itself into the great Lake of Velino, where the river of the same name passes, which is now called, "Il lago di pié di luco."

extraordinary depression of spirits, which lasted several days. (117) He made every effort to surmount it by his prayers and his tears; and one day when he was praying with more than ordinary fervour, a celestial voice said to him, "Francis, if thou hadst the faith of a grain of mustard seed, and thou wert to say to this mountain, go thither from hence, it would go." (118) Not understanding the meaning of these words, he asked what mountain it was; and he was answered: "The mountain is the temptation." He immediately replied, weeping and humbling himself, "Lord, Thy will be done." And from that moment the temptation ceased, and his mind became perfectly at ease.

The year 1218 was divided between the stay he made at St. Mary of the Angels, for the instruction of his brethren, and some excursions he made to Mount Alvernia and to some other places, where new dwellings were made over to him. His route was always marked by the

(117) Mark of Lisbon, bishop of Oporto, in Portugal, author of the Chronicles of the Order of the Friars Minor, says in the first book, cap. 72, that it was a deep melancholy which caused him to be disgusted with everything, even prayer, and that it lasted two years. S. Francis de Sales, in his Introduction to a Devout Life, part 4, chap. 15, and other spiritual writers, only say that it was a painful affection of the mind, which lasted several days. It may be that Mark of Lisbon being in Italy, where he compiled his work, may have seen some manuscript which put two years instead of two months. However, the Holy Spirit usually caused the Saint to feel in his soul a joy which was manifest in his face, and communicated itself to his companions, as we shall see further on. And finally, it is not possible to make a deep melancholy of two years agree with his actions. It could not have taken place during his whole life.

(118) Math. xvii. 19.

fruits of his preaching, and by the splendour of his miracles. Passing by Montaigu, above the Valley of Caprése, before a church of St. Paul, which was being repaired, and seeing that two of the masons could not succeed in lifting a stone, which was to be placed as a jamb for the door, his compassion and zeal induced him to lift it and place it as required, which he did alone, and with a strength which was not that of a mortal. The abbot of the monastery of St. Justin, in the diocese of Perugia, met him, and alighted from his horse to compliment him, and to speak to him on some matters of conscience. After a conversation replete with unction, the abbot, recommending himself humbly to his prayers, Francis replied: "I will pray with all my heart;" and they parted. At a little distance from thence, the Saint said to his companion: "Wait a little, brother, I will here perform my promise." He knelt to pray; and while he was so doing, the abbot, who was riding on, felt his mind inflamed with a suavity of devotion, such as he had never before experienced. He stopped, and the vivid impressions with which God favoured him, threw him into an ecstasy. When he was come to himself again, he became aware that it was entirely owing to the prayers of Francis, and he became the friend of the order, and he mentioned what had occurred to him to several persons as a thing which was quite miraculous.

On his return from his last journey in 1218, which was much longer than any of the others had been, Francis found that a new building, large

and commodious, had been erected in his absence, close to the Portiuncula convent. Displeased at seeing this infringement of the rules of holy poverty, he took some of his brethren with him, and went on the roof, to begin to break it down, which he certainly would have carried through, had not some of the people from Assisi, who were there, informed him that the building belonged to the town; that it had been built by them for the foreign religious, who daily arrived there, it being dishonourable to the town to see them compelled, in consequence of the want of room in the convent, to sleep outside, and even in the fields; that the town had destined this building for their accommodation, and that they would be received there in its name. On this he came down, and said to them:—"If that, then, is your house, I leave it, and shall not meddle with it; we shall have nothing to do with it, neither myself nor my brethren; take care of it yourselves." It was decided in consequence by a deliberation of the municipality, that the magistrates should provide for the repairs.

BOOK III.

THE LIFE

OF

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

BOOK III.

The time of the general chapter drew near, of that chapter which became so celebrated by the number of religious which attended it, and by many other marvellous circumstances. Before its assembling the holy patriarch proposed to go to Perugia, to confer with the cardinal protector, who was legate there, on the affairs of the order. Wading states, on good authority, that St. Dominic was there at the same time, (1) and that

(1) Father Echard, author of the Dissertations which are at the head of the work entitled, "Scriptores Ordinis Prædicatorum," is by no means satisfied with Wading, with the continuators of Bollandus, and with Fleury, who say that S. Dominic was at Perugia with S. Francis at Cardinal Ugolino's, in 1219. He has no doubt that the learned Jesuits of Antwerp will look into this with great accuracy, when they come to speak of S. Dominic and S. Francis, and then admit having taken chimeras for solid and indisputable things. At any rate, the sons of S. Francis will not except against the learned Jesuits, whom a son of S. Dominic has chosen as the judges; and they will be sure of three things; 1st, that these

they had several deliberations together with the legate, who had a similar esteem for both.

One day when they were in serious conversation on the affairs of the church, the cardinal asked them whether they should consider it advisable for some of their members to be raised to ecclesiastical dignities; "for," said he, "I am persuaded that they would have no less zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, than those bishops of the early ages of the church, who, although in great poverty, animated by ardent charity, fed their flocks with salutary instructions and the example of a good life."

After a contest of humility between the two patriarchs, as to who should speak first, Dominic, urged by Francis to take the lead, said to him :— "You excel me in humility, and I will excel you in obedience." He then gave the cardinal this answer :—"My lord, my brethren may well consider themselves as holding a very elevated rank. What is there more honourable than teaching others from the evangelical pulpit? What should well-thinking minds desire more than to be employed in defence of the faith, and to combat the enemies of the church? For this reason I strenuously desire that my brethren may remain as they are, and I will keep them so as long as I can." Francis made the following reply :—"My

learned and religious critics will admit that they were in error, and avow it sincerely, and will adduce proofs of it; 2nd, that they will weigh the reasons adduced by Father Echard, and those of Wading; 3rd, that as respects the two orders, their decision will be perfectly impartial. Script. Ord. Prædict. recens. tom. 1. Wad. ad ann. 1219, Dissert. 3.

lord, my brethren have received the appellation of Minors, in order that they might never have the presumption to become great. If it be your intention that they shall bear fruit in the church, leave them in their vocation, and never permit them to be raised to prelatures."

The cardinal was greatly edified by their answers, and highly commended the humility of their opinions, but he did not therefore change his views. He thought, on the contrary, that such ministers would be most useful in the church, considering the corruption of the times.

The church has since followed the opinion of this eminent dignitary, having made many bishops and cardinals from the two orders, and several have been even elevated to the sovereign pontificate, as we see in this day, our holy father Benedict XIII. being of the order of St. Dominic. (2)

But the Friars Preachers and the Friars Minor, who have preserved the spirit of their vocation, have never had any other feelings than those of their holy patriarchs on the subject of ecclesiastical dignities. They have refused them (3) as

(2) Benedict XIII., who was elected Pope on the 29th of May, 1724, after the Conclave had sat two months and nine days.

(3) Pope Innocent XIII. of happy memory, has placed before the Christian community an example of this kind, in beatifying Andrew Conti, of the family of the Counts of Segni, which was that also of this Pontiff, religious of the order of S. Francis, nephew of Pope Alexander IV., who refused to receive the Roman purple, which his uncle sent him, and who liked better to practise, as a Friar Minor, poverty, humility, and all other virtues, which God honoured in his person by many splendid miracles. S. Anton. chron. part 3, tit. 24, cap. 9, § 41. Wading, ann. tom. 2, ad an. 1298.

long as they could, and those who have accepted them, have been compelled to do so by superior authority, which they could not be dispensed from obeying. (4)

St. Bonaventure expresses himself so strongly on this head, that we have thought it desirable to give his own words, not to weaken them. (5) "What must we say of those Friars Minor, who have been raised to the episcopate? I answer, that if the church compels them to take upon themselves the care of souls in this station, so that they cannot absolutely refuse to do so, they must not be considered as having left the order, provided they aim at a continuance in it as much as in their power, as in the bosom of their mother. But if, on the contrary, they aspire to the episcopate without being called thereto, and even without being compelled to accept it, merely to be disembarrassed from the austerities of their order and the inconveniences of a poor state of life, I believe they will have the same lot as he had who said:—'I will ascend and sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the North.'" (6)

The holy doctor followed these principles; he refused the archbishopric of York, in England, (7)

(4) It is well known that our holy Father Pope Benedict XIII. only consented to his election after considerable resistance, and then not to be opposed to the will of God, which he was obliged to admit that it was.

(5) Exposit. in regul. Fr. Min. cap. 2, pag. 313, col. 2, tom. 7, Ap. S. Bonav.

(6) Isaias xiv. 13.

(7) Vit. S. Bonav. cap. 14. Sixt. 4, const. 76, in Bullar. Rom. tom. 2. S. Anton. chronic. part 3, tit. 24, cap. 8. Wading, ad an. 1265 and 1274.

one of the richest churches in Europe, of which Pope Clement XIV. sent him the bulls. It was solely on receiving the positive order of Gregory X., that he could be induced to be made Cardinal and Bishop of Albano. It was with regret and lamentation that he received the insignia of the Cardinalate in the midst of the most debasing acts of religious humility; he made no alteration in his manner of life, well knowing that episcopal consecration cannot make void the obligation of vows, as is declared by the church in Papal ordinances and general councils, (8) which St. Thomas has learnedly explained in the following terms:— "Those religious who are raised to the episcopate, are obliged to observe all that their rule directs, which is not incompatible with the functions of their episcopal character." (9) Such is the doctrine of this worthy child of St. Dominic, which another of his children, our most Holy Father Benedict XIII., put in practice when Bishop and Cardinal, and still continues to practise on the apostolic throne, to the edification of the whole Christian church.

Brother Leo, the companion and confessor of St. Francis, who was at Perugia, and who assisted at all the conferences, says, that they spoke much on the propagation of the faith and the salvation of souls; that having made reciprocal

(8) Innoc. I. Epist. 2, ad Victrie, epist. Rothomag. Nicol. I. Epist. 55, ad Egilon. Archiep. Senon. in Council, antiq. Galliæ. tom. 3, p. 274, concil general 8, can. 27, concil general 12. Lateran 4, can. 16. See P. Thomassin in the discipline of the Church, part 3, liv. 1. chap. 32, n. 19.

(9) 2. 2. quest. 185, Art. 8.

inquiries into the peculiarities of their respective orders, Dominic proposed to Francis to unite them, and make but one order, in order that the difference of the Institute should not divide those whom the intimate friendship of their fathers had closely united. To this proposition Francis replied:—"My dear brother, it has been God's will that our orders should be different, the one more austere than the other, in order to their being by this variety better adapted to human infirmity, and to give an opportunity to such as could not bear a life of very great austerity to embrace one which was somewhat milder." Leo adds, that they took steps for maintaining permanent agreement between the two orders; and after having mutually praised their congregations, they recommended to their companions who were present, reciprocal respect and friendship for each other; that Dominic requested Francis to give him his girdle, which was a cord with large knots; and having obtained it after many entreaties, he wore it during the remainder of his life under his habit, as a tie and perpetual symbol of the charity which so intimately united them. (10)

Francis having discussed with the Cardinal Protector all the affairs of his order, left Perugia to return to St. Mary of the Angels. As he discoursed on the road with his companion Leo,

(10) But besides Brother Leo, Bernard de Besse, secretary to S. Bonaventure, who had lived with Leo, relates the same anecdote, as does likewise Colvenerius, professor of Louvain, and many others. Wading, ad an. 1219.

on the virtue of humility and entire abnegation of self, he said in a moment of fervour :

"My dear brother, I do not believe myself to be a Friar Minor, and in truth I am not one, unless I can bear humbly and with entire tranquillity of mind, all that could happen to me under circumstances which I can figure to myself. I suppose, then, that my brethren came to seek me, with great respect and confidence, to assist at the General Chapter which is about to be holden, and solicit me to preach at it. If, after having exhorted them in such terms as God shall have inspired me, they were to rise up against me, and manifest openly that they hold me in aversion, saying :—'We will no longer have you to govern us ; we are ashamed of having such a man as you at our head, who has neither learning nor eloquence, who is simple and ignorant, with very little prudence and experience ; therefore, in future, do not have the arrogance to call yourself our superior.' If they were to put other affronts upon me, and to drive me ignominiously from the assembly, I should not consider myself to be a true religious, unless I were to receive all this as patiently and with equal serenity of countenance as I should receive those who would load me with praise and honour."

To this he added : "Assuredly places of honour are very dangerous to salvation, not only from the vain glory which is to be feared, but likewise from the government, which is very difficult ; whereas, in opprobrium there is nothing but merit

to be acquired. If I am removed from the headship, I shall be exempt from being accountable to God for a great number of souls. Prelature is a station of danger, and praise brings one to the very edge of the precipice. In an humble, lowly station, there is much to be gained. Why, then, do we look to and prefer what is dangerous to what has so much more spiritual advantage, since it is for this that time is given to us?" These are sentiments which should be well pondered by persons in every station of life, whether they aspire to employments, or fear the losing of them. The profound humility of St. Francis does not admit of a doubt of his having gone through the trial which he here supposes; and even in putting it thus hypothetically, he strengthened in his mind the virtue requisite for supporting it in reality. These sorts of suppositions, which might be stumbling blocks to the weak, are very useful to those who aspire to perfect humility.

The Friars Minor assembled for the General Chapter of their Order at the convent of St. Mary of the Angels, or Portiuncula, near Assisi, at the Feast of Pentecost, and their number exceeded five thousand. The circumstance is truly amazing, particularly when it is recollected that some remained in their respective convents; that the Order had only existed ten years since its institution; and that the novices had always been admitted by the founder himself, except since the Chapter of the year 1216, when he had given the provincial ministers power to receive them. It is

nevertheless certain, that more than five thousand Friars Minors assisted at this celebrated Chapter ; the fact is attested by four of St. Francis' companions, who were present at it ; by St. Bonaventure, who lived with them (11) and by many others ; there is no modern author who does not consider it as proved. (12)

What can be said on this subject, except that it pleased God, to recall in some measure, by the rapid establishment of this Order, the wonderful spread of the Gospel by the preaching of the Apostles? St. Augustin says that the Apostles were as dark clouds from whence lightning and thunder emanated; (13) that by their poverty and their simplicity they shone in the eyes of the universe ; that by the powerful virtue and splendour of their admirable actions, they overthrew everything which was opposed to the empire of Jesus Christ, and in a short time christianised the world. May we not also say, that Francis

(11) Father Echard doubts there having been five thousand Friars Minors at this chapter. and he grounds this doubt on S. Bonaventure not having recorded it; from whence he concludes, either that this fact was unknown to the holy doctor, or was considered by him to be inaccurate. But he would have had no reason for this doubt if he had read his Legend, of which the following are the precise words: "Multiplicatis jam fratribus, cœpit eos....in loco Sancto Mariæ de Portiuncula ad generale Capitulum convocare....ubi licet omnium necessariorum esset penuria, fratrum que multitudo ultra quinque millia conveniret aliquando; divina tamen opitulante clementiâ et victus sufficientia suberat, et salus comitabatur corporea et spiritualis jucunditas affluebat." A mistake of this nature will doubtless attract the attention of the learned Jesuits of Antwerp, whose criticism the erudite Dominican calls for. Script. Ord. Prædic. recensiti. tom. I, Dissert. 3.

(12) Raynald. Spond. Bzov. Fleury, the Abbé de Choisi, Baillet.

(13) S. Augus. in Psal. 96, n. 7 and 8.

and his companions, men poor and simple, were a representation of the Apostles; that Jesus Christ rendered them powerful and eminent in words and works, to bring back sinners to His empire, and that by them in an inconceivably short period of time, an immense number of Apostolic men was collected and formed who embraced the same institute, in order to exercise the same ministry? What assists us in comprehending that in ten years it had been possible to build a sufficient number of houses, to contain so many thousand men is, that they were poor and without any income.

The religious of this Chapter were lodged in huts made of matting, erected all round the Portiuncula convent from which this Chapter has been called the Chapter of Mats. They were there separated from the world, but perfectly united among themselves, all lovers of watching and fasting after the example of their Father; zealous in prayer and in the recital of Psalms, in spiritual reading, and in readiness to execute all works of mercy, and having no other hope than that of the happiness of a future life.

Cardinal Ugolino, as Protector of the Order, came to preside over the Chapter, and all the religious went in procession before him. He opened the Assembly on Whit Sunday the 26th of May: (14) he officiated pontifically, and preached; and he deemed it right to inspect all the ranks of this

(14) The continuators of Bollandus remark, that Whitsunday fell this year on the 25th of May; nevertheless, it appears that it was on the 26th. Act. SS. tom. 2, Maii. Vit. S. Angel. carmel. pag. 828.

holy army of the Lord, in which he found everything in good order. These soldiers of Jesus Christ were not seen wandering about, but all were collected in groups, a hundred in one spot, sixty in another, more or less, and conversing on holy subjects, on their own salvation, or on that of their neighbours, and on the means of reforming the morals of a corrupt world. The Cardinal, delighted with so interesting and unusual a scene, said to those who followed him, as Jacob had when he met the angels on his way: Truly this is the Camp of God. (15) We might also apply to it what Balaam could not prevent himself from saying, when he saw the Israelites encamped: How beautiful are thy tabernacles, O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel! (16)

Francis, as a general in his camp, went through all the tents; he encouraged his troops to fight valiantly the battles of the Lord, assuring them of receiving assistance from on high, animating some, and fulfilling in every place the duties of a vigilant chief.

He assembled all his brethren, and addressed them in an excellent discourse, of which the following embraces the subject: We have promised great things; and we have been promised greater. Let us keep the first, and let us sigh after the others: Pleasure is of short duration, the penalty is eternal. Sufferings are light, glory is infinite. Many are called, but few are chosen. Each one will receive according to his deserts.

On this beautiful text he exhorted them in the

(15) Genes. xxxii. 2. (16) Num. xxiv. 5.

most forcible and moving terms, to the practice of virtue and to the duties of a religious life; urging them above all things, to implicit obedience to our Holy Mother the Church, to a contempt of the world, to purity of mind and body, to a love of holy poverty and humility, to charity, to concord and mildness, to continued watchfulness, and to an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls. He recommended to them to pray for all the faithful, and particularly for the exaltation of the Holy Roman Church, and for the benefactors of the Order. After which he positively forbad them to have any anxiety whatever for anything concerning the body, and he quoted to them these words of the Psalmist: Cast thy care upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee. (17) He had conformed strictly to the rule he laid down, for he had made no provision for the Chapter.

St. Dominic, who out of friendship for S. Francis, had come with six of his companions to this assembly (18) and who heard this discourse, was fearful lest what he had forbidden was perhaps an exaggeration, and that it might seem to be tempting the Lord, if some steps were not taken for procuring food for so great a multitude. But he

(17) Psalm liv. 25.

(18) Father Echard maintains strenuously that the chronology of the Life of S. Dominic, does not tally with his having assisted at the chapter of the Friars Minors held at S. Mary of the Angels in 1219. It is one of the points to which he calls the attention of the Jesuits of Antwerp, who have said positively that the holy patriarch was there, and Fleury has followed them; until these learned critics shall have decided, we relate the fact as we have found it, and of which Wading brings credible evidence. Script. Ord. Prædic. tom. 1, Dissert. 3. Act. SS. supra Hist. Eccles. de Fleury. lib. 78, n. 20. Wading, ad ann. 1219.

S[illegible] never was in this place.

was of a very different way of thinking shortly after when he saw arrive from Assisi, Perugia, Spello, Foligno, Spoleto, and many more distant towns, ecclesiastics, laics, nobles, burgesses, and persons of every state of life, who brought with them not only what was necessary for the subsistence of such vast numbers, but pressed forward to serve the religious themselves with an emulation of humility and charity.

So marked an interposition of Providence in behalf of these evangelical poor struck the Patriarch of the Friars Preachers with astonishment; and it is believed that it suggested to him the intention which he carried into execution the year after, when he assembled the first general Chapter of his Order at Bologna, (19) in which it was resolved that the Friars Preachers should adopt the system of entire poverty, and consider it as the fundamental rule of their Order, renouncing for ever all property in land, or revenue arising therefrom, even what they had at Toulouse, which the Pope had confirmed to them by his first Bull. In dying he recommended to them this evangelical poverty as the foundation of their institute; and lest this foundation should be undermined by the prudence of the flesh, he forbad in the strongest terms, on pain of the curse of the Almighty, and of his also, (20) the intro-

(19) These are Fleury's own words, which are merely translations from the authors of the Order of S. Dominic.

(20) S. Antoninus observes that the Holy See, which has the plenitude of power, has, for good reasons, dispensed with this point in the Order of S. Dominic; and the Council of Trent has since given permission to all monasteries and to all houses, whether of men or women, to possess property and funds, even to the mendicant

duction into the Order of any temporal possessions.

May what made so strong an impression on the mind of St. Dominic teach the faithful never to be mistrustful of the care of Divine Providence!

However, we are not to look for, or expect miraculous assistance; they are not in the ordinary course of God's dispensations; but after doing all that depends on ourselves, provided there be no irregularity on our part, and that our desires are within the bounds of moderation, without any impatience as to the event, we may assure ourselves that according to the words of the wise man, No one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded. (21)

Several prelates, and other persons of quality, who had been invited by Cardinal Ugolino to the Chapter, as to a grand and admirable sight, had the curiosity to examine everything minutely. They saw the religious in their miserable huts, coarsely dressed, taking but a slender proportion of nourishment, sleeping on mats spread on the earth with a log of wood for a pillow. They noticed at the same time, that they were quite calm, that joy and concord were universal amongst them, and that they were entirely submissive to their saintly founder. Admiring all these things, they said to each other: "This shows that the

orders, and to those who, by their constitutions were forbidden from having any. The only exception from this is the Order of S. Francis, who profess to keep the rule of their founder with the greatest strictness. S. Anton. chron. part 3, chap. 4, § 13. Counc. Trent, sess. 25, de regul. cap. 3.

(21) Eccles. ii. 11.

way to heaven is narrow, and that it is very difficult for the rich to enter into the kingdom of God. (22) We flatter ourselves that we shall eke out our salvation in the enjoyment of all the comforts of life, having our ease in all things, while these people, to save their souls, deprive themselves of everything, mortify their bodies, and are notwithstanding not without great apprehension. We should like to die as they will, but we do not choose to live as they live. Similar reflections converted a great number of persons, and more than five hundred took the habit of the Friars Minor during the Chapter.

The Holy Patriarch found that many of his religious submitted themselves to extraordinary mortifications, which either shortened their days or rendered them useless to the Order by the illnesses which were the consequence. He therefore publicly forbad them, by the virtue of holy obedience, to make use of any such, and he ordered all who had coats of mail, iron girdles, or other instruments of mortification, to leave them off and deliver them up to him. This was done, and some most extraordinary modes of inflicting self-punishment were discovered. The number of coats of mail and iron girdles which were delivered up were more than five hundred ; they were put into a heap, and the Patriarch thought proper to show them to the Cardinal and his company for their edification. They were astonished on witnessing so great a love of such penitential

(22) Math. vii. 14 ; Luke xviii. 24.

austerities, in men of such pure and holy lives. In their presence he forbad his brethren all sorts of indiscreet mortifications, which are injurious to the body; representing to them that they either hasten death, or throw the body into such a state of languor and weakness, as makes it unfit for spiritual exercises, or an impediment to the practice of good works, to labour for the glory of God, and to giving good example to their neighbours. Oh, fortunate and happy times, when it was necessary to check such failings!

God made known to Francis, in a revelation he had during the sitting of the chapter, that the prince of darkness, alarmed at the fervour of the new order, had collected thousands of demons, to concert together on the means of bringing it to ruin; and that one of them, more astute than the rest, had put forth an opinion which it had been decided should be acted upon. It was not to attack the Friars Minor openly, but to have recourse to artifice; to induce them to receive into their society nobles, learned men, and youths. Nobles, in order by their means to introduce effeminacy, in which they had been brought up; learned men, who, proud of their learning, should have a contempt for humility; and youths, who, being weak and delicate, would greatly relax in the regular discipline.

Religion teaches us that there are demons, and that they are subordinate one to the other; that God, when it pleases Him, permits them to tempt mankind, and even torment them corporally: and St. Paul speaks of "the Prince of the powers

of this air."(23) We know what Satan did to holy Job; and what our Lord said to St. Peter: "Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat;"(24) and what He noticed elsewhere: "When an unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he taketh with him seven spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there."(25) Thus we need have no difficulty in believing that the prince of darkness had collected such a number of demons against St. Francis and his institute. St. Gregory (26) says, that they attack with greater violence those in whom they find a greater disposition to holiness, and that the principal demons are employed in the attacks on the bravest soldiers of Jesus Christ. What must be the wrath of these malignant spirits against the apostolical men, whose lives are wholly employed in effecting the salvation of souls!

Francis had already been made aware by the means of a young female who was possessed, as St. Bonaventure relates, (27) that the devils,

(23) Ephes. ii. 2.

(24) Math. xii. 43 and 45.

(25) Wading mentions a revelation made to S. Bridget, relative to the efforts and artifices employed by the devils against the Order of S. Francis; and the words of a heretic possessed by a devil, who was exorcised by S. Dominic at Carcassonne. Very wholesome instructions are to be derived therefrom; but as to what was said to S. Dominic Bzovius might have been more just to the Order of S. Francis. He has been equally unjust on other occasions in his Ecclesiastical Annals; Wading has corrected him mildly and with caution in the Annals of the Friars Minors; and Dermicius Thadeus, in a book entitled, Nitela Franciscanæ Religionis, printed at Lyons in 1627, with approbation, by Claude Landry, in 4.

(26) Sanct. Gregor. Moral. lib. 29, cap. 22, n. 44, Edit. Bened.

(27) Sanct. Bonav. in Hexam. Serm. 18. post med. 1 Cor. xii. 10.

irritated by the injury he did them, had assembled against him, and then he merely said, as St. Paul did, I am the strongest. But he was alarmed when he learnt from God Himself the increase of their rage. He retired for two days to an oratory to pray for grace to be able to escape from their snares, and that he might be protected by good angels. His prayer gave him fresh courage; he returned to the chapter, and addressed his brethren with energy on the watchfulness with which it was incumbent on them to work out their salvation, without placing too much reliance on the holiness of their state of life, from which they must be apprehensive lest they should fall off by the machinations of their enemy. "You know," he said, "the examples we have; Satan fell from Heaven, and drew with him a number of the angels; he caused Adam and Eve to be driven from Paradise; he prayed to be allowed to sift the Apostles as wheat is sifted; and he did so with such effect, that one of them betrayed his Master, another denied Him, and all fled when He was captured."

The Saint then explained to them what God had made known to him of the designs of the devil; and in order that the enemy's malignity might fall on himself, he warned them to pay more attention in the reception of novices to the sentiments of the mind than to the advantages of birth; to be very careful that the learned whom they should admit, should be devoid of pride, and were fit to edify others by their humility, and to be careful that such as joined them

in the flower of youth, should be informed of all which they would have to put in practice in future.

For the holy man did not think it requisite, in consequence of Satan's malice, to prohibit noblemen from joining his order, since their example has great influence, and the elevated sentiments which are found in that class, render them more fit to do great things for the service of God. He did not wish to drive away the learned, since learning is necessary for the exercise of the functions of religion, and since those men who join the knowledge of sound doctrine to an evangelical life, are most instructive teachers in the Church, for the dissipation of error and the establishment of virtue. He also desired that they should receive such young men as should present themselves in the tenderest age, "because it is good for man to bear the yoke from his youth:"(28) to leave the world, before having any knowledge of it, except through the lights of the Church, and to offer themselves as pure victims, rather than to bring to Him the remains of a heart stained by the passions; and moreover, our Saviour said to His disciples, who turned away the children who came to Him: "Suffer them, and forbid them not to come to me."(29) We know that there are in the world censorious people who condemn the custom of permitting young persons to enter into a religious state: it would be easy to show, if it were not

(28) Jerem. Thren. iii. 27.

(29) Math. xix. 13 and 14.

for fear of rendering this work too voluminous, that their arguments are based on a superficial foundation, and are contrary to the maxims of Christianity; we therefore content ourselves with saying that at the Council of Trent, (30) which was guided by the Spirit of truth in its discipline, as well as in its dogmas and morality, permission was given to persons of either sex, to make profession of a religious at the full age of sixteen; that rule is authorised by the ordinances (31) of all Christian princes, and it therefore seems very extraordinary that any individuals (32) should be rash enough to oppose their private opinions to so respectable an authority.

Francis, who was desirous of encouraging the fervour of his disciples, apprized them of what they had to fear, and anticipated the smallest

(30) Sess. 25, de regul. cap. 15.

(31) All that was done on this subject in France is brought together in the 4th tome of the Memoires du Clergé 1710, tit. 1, cap. 1.

(32) The author of the Lois Ecclesiastiques, chap. 12, maxim 7th, page 555, gives the words of the Council of Trent, and the Ordinance of Blois for such as make their profession at the full age of sixteen; and in the maxim he says, "The Ordinance of Orleans did not permit males to make their profession till the age of twenty-five, and the females till the age of twenty. If this was still adhered to, fewer persons would be seen who repented of having embraced a state of life which they had entered with maturer reflection." Was it right in the author to repeat approvingly the Article of the Ordinance of Orleans, which that of Blois had corrected by another, which a general Council, the Ordinance of our kings, and the decrees of our superior courts authorised, and which is a law in the Canonical and Civil Jurisprudence? Ought he not to have known that if some religious persons repent of the choice they have made, this may occur as often from their neglecting the duties of their vocation, as from their having wanted a vocation? He ought to correct this sentence in his book, in which other faults have been pointed out to him.

inclinations to pride in them, by salutary humiliations. The Cardinal Protector having one day preached before all the religious of the chapter, and having concluded his sermon by bestowing on them considerable praise, the holy patriarch asked his permission to address the audience. He foretold to them, and represented in lively colours, all that was to happen to the order; the temptations to which they were to be exposed, the tribulations they were to suffer, the changes that would be brought in, and their decline. He reproached them with their laxity, and with their want of fervour in co-operating with the peculiar graces they had received from God; he spoke so energetically, that in censuring their foolish obsequiousness, if such a fault they had, he covered them with confusion. The cardinal was somewhat mortified, and said:—"Pray, why, brother, did you gainsay me, setting the imperfections of your brethren in opposition to the praises I had given them?" "My lord and my father," answered Francis, "I did so, in order to preserve the substance of your praise. I was apprehensive that such praise being given by a person of your exalted rank, might inspire vanity into the minds of those in whom humility has not as yet thrown out deep roots." This affords great matter for reflection for those virtuous persons who voluntarily receive praise, at least when it is artfully administered; and for indiscreet flatterers, who expose virtue to a dangerous trial.

What occurred on the following day, showed that the holy man had received from God the per-

fect means of appreciating men's minds. Brother Elias, who was the provincial for Tuscany; brother John of Strachia, who was provincial for Bologna, and several others came to the Cardinal Protector and intreated him to tell Francis, as from himself, that he ought to listen to the advice of his brethren, among whom there were many learned men, fully capable of governing; particularly as he himself was a simple and unread man, whose ill health did not permit him to bring their affairs into good order. They added, that respect ought to be paid to the ancient rules of St. Basil, of St. Augustine, and of St. Benedict, and that we should not differ so widely from them by a new rule and excessive severity, as if we wished to be better than our fathers.

The cardinal took his time, and then proposed all these things to Francis, as maxims which he deemed good for the government of the order. The saint being immediately made aware by the Spirit of God, that these things had been suggested to him, rose up from the place in which he had been seated with the cardinal, took him respectfully by the hand, and led him to the brethren who were assembled in chapter, and said:

"My brethren, my brethren, God has called me by the way of simplicity and humility, in order that I might follow the folly of the cross: it is for His glory and my confusion, and for the security of your consciences I am about to tell you what He said to me:—'Francis,' He said, 'I desire that you may be in the world a new little idiot, who shall preach by thy actions and

by thy discourses the folly of the cross. Do thou and thine follow me only, and not any other manner of life.' Speak not to me therefore of any other rule, he added, for I shall not follow, nor prescribe any other than what God has in His mercy given me; those who swerve from it, and detach their brethren from it, I fear will feel the Divine vengeance, and will be covered with confusion, when at length they shall be obliged once more to enter into this path."

Then addressing himself to the cardinal, he said:—"My lord, these wise people, whom your lordship praises so much, would wish by their worldly prudence to deceive both God and you; but they deceive themselves, endeavouring to destroy what God has ordained for their salvation, through me his unworthy servant. I attribute nothing to myself of what I do, or of what I say; I rely not on my own lights in the government of the order; I arrange everything by long prayers with our Heavenly Father, who governs it sovereignly, and who has made His will known to us by so many manifest signs, in order to bring to perfection the work He has commenced by so miserable a man as I am, for the salvation of souls, and the edification of our holy mother the church. Those who prefer the wisdom of the world to the will of the Lord, expose themselves manifestly to be lost." Having spoken thus, Francis retired.

The cardinal, who admired the energy of his words, and the light, which disclosed to him at once the most secret thoughts, said to the supe-

riors who were abashed :—"My dear brethren, you have seen how the Holy Ghost has himself spoken by the mouth of this apostolical man ; his words came forth as a two-edged sword, which has penetrated to the bottom of the heart. (33) Take care that you do not grieve the Spirit of God ; be not ungrateful for the favours He has done you. He is truly in this poor man, and manifests to you through him, the marvels of His power ; in listening to him, it is Jesus Christ that you hear ; in despising him, it is Jesus Christ whom you despise. (34) Humble yourselves, therefore, and obey him, if it is your desire to please God, and not lose the fruit of your vocation ; for I know by experience, that everything which either the devils or men are about to attempt against his order, is revealed to him. Whatsoever may be said to him with good or bad intention, it is difficult to find him off his guard ; neither my advice, nor that of any other person will turn him from his purpose." The provincials who had given rise to this scene were moved, and submitted themselves to the will of the patriarch.

Among the religious who had congregated at the chapter, there were many who came to seek a remedy for the ill-treatment they had received in many places out of Italy, which had its rise in two causes : the first was, that they had no authenticated letters to show that their institute had been approved by the church ; the second

(33) Hebr. iv. 12 ; Eph. iv. 30.
(34) Luke x. 16.

was, that the pastors would not allow them to preach. They begged therefore that the Pope might be solicited to give them written testimonials to certify that they had his approbation of their institution; and, moreover, that they should obtain from the Holy Father a privilege, in virtue of which they might preach wherever they thought proper, even without leave from the bishops.

The holy founder could not hear this second article without indignation. "What! my brethren," said he, "are you still devoid of understanding; (35) and do you not know the will of God? It is His pleasure that we should gain the good-will of our superiors by our respect for them, and by humility; and then by word and good example, those who are under them. When the bishops see that you live holily, and that you do not encroach on their authority, they will themselves apply to you to work for the salvation of the souls which are committed to their care; they themselves will collect their flocks to listen to you, and to imitate you. Let it be our sole privilege (36) to have no privilege calculated to

(35) Math. xv. 16.

(36) When Cardinal Baronius says that S. Francis did not approve of privileges obtained in order to withdraw themselves from Episcopal authority, and that those enjoyed by his order had been obtained by Brother Elias, a man who was guided by the prudence of the flesh, he could not mean this as applicable to the immediate dependance on the Holy See, in which the order of Friars Minor is; for it was S. Francis himself who, in 1210, solicited from the Pope the approval of his rule, where this dependance is specially noticed; and it was only in 1211 that Elias entered the order. Father Thomassin, who quotes this passage from Baronius in the same sense, should have noticed the mistake. Baron. ad

swell our pride ; to give ourselves a confidence which shall be to the prejudice of others, and be the cause of contentions. Let us ask nothing of the Holy See, but what is calculated to aid us in serving God, in extending the faith, and in gaining souls under the good pleasure of the prelates, without causing any disturbance among the people."

Some represented that they had found many of the heads of the parochial clergy so harsh, that they had been unable to mollify them, either by entreaties, or by labour, by submissiveness or good example, so as to obtain leave to preach to their parishioners, or to receive from them any corporal assistance ; to which Francis replied :

" My brethren, we are sent to the aid of priests, to make good that in which they may be deficient. Each one will receive his reward, (37) not according to the degree of his authority, but in proportion to his labours. Know then, that what is most agreeable to God is to work for the salvation of souls, and that we shall best succeed in this by living in concord with the priests than by living separately from them ; if they throw ob-

ann. 676, n. 7. Thomassin, Discipline de l'Eglise, part 4, lib. 1, cap. 52, n. 13. It must further be remarked, that it was two bishops, those of Assisi and Sabina, who seconded Francis's application, and strenuously solicited Innocent III. to approve his rule, which rendered his order immediately dependant on the Holy See. The holy patriarch then chose to have this sort of privilege, with all its consequences, without which his order, as he intended it to be, could neither be established nor exist; but he did not choose that any other should be applied for ; and if his order had any other subsequently, the Sovereign Pontiffs gave them by their own accord, and for reasons known to themselves.

(37) 1 Cor. iii. 8.

stacles in the way, God, to whom all vengeance belongs, (38) will give them in His good time what is their due. Be therefore submissive to ecclesiastical superiors, in order to avert as much as may be in your power any jealousies. (39) If you are children of peace, you will soon ingratiate yourselves with the clergy and the people, and this will be more acceptable to God than if you gained over the people, and thereby gave scandal to the clergy. Hide the faults of the priests, make good what they are deficient in, and be only in consequence the more humble."

The religious of St. Francis must not be surprised if they, even in these days, meet with opposition in the exercise of their holy ministries. It is an occurrence which the similarity of men may at all times bring about ; (40) and which St. Paul experienced more than any other in the course of his ministry. But let them be careful

(38) Deuter. xxxii. 35.

(39) Father Thomassin, in his Discipline de l'Eglise, points out the close alliance there is between the secular and regular clergy, and after having adduced many striking proofs of this, he concludes. "That these two states having been so united originally, they could not in after times but preserve these mutual relations and communications so essential for their glory and mutual preservation." To which is added, that these ties should be still stronger between the ecclesiastics and the mendicant Orders, such as the Friars Minor, since these latter, having no titles, no benefices, no revenues, are destined by their rules, by the Popes, and by the bishops, to exercise the apostolical ministries, solely as auxiliaries ; and that as the harvest is abundant, and as the numbers of workmen sometimes small, the pastors should see, without envy, ministers of good will, who come to share in their labours. Discipline de l'Eglise. Part 1, lib. 1, cap. 47. Part 2, lib. 1, cap. 36. Part 3, lib. 1, cap. 32 and 33, and lib, 4, cap. 2. Part 4, lib. 1, cap. 50.

(40) 2 Cor. x. xi.

to put in practice the advice of their father, in order that they may be able to say in truth with the apostle :—"We have injured no man." (41) And, finally, the advice which he gave them must induce us to notice his moderation and his discretion, in an age when the church had reason to renew the laments of one of the prophets against the pastors of Israel. (42)

He judged it proper, by the advice of the Cardinal Protector, to procure apostolic letters to make known the approbation his institute had received ; and he obtained them from the Pope, who was then at Viterbo. These were the first which were given to the order of Friars Minor : their contents are as follows :

Honorius, Bishop, servant of the servants of God, to the Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Deacons, Archdeacons, and other superior ecclesiastics—

"As our dear son, brother Francis and his companions, have renounced the vanities of the world, and embraced a state of life which the Roman church has justly approved ; and, following the example of the apostles, are about to go into different parts to announce the word of God ; we beg and exhort you in our Lord, and we command you by these apostolical letters, to receive as catholic and faithful, the brothers of this order, the bearers of these letters who may apply to you, to be favourable to them, and to treat them with kindness, for the honour of God, and

(41) 1 Cor. vii. 2. (42) Ezech. xxxi. 1, et seq.

out of consideration for us. Given this 3rd of the Ides of June, the third year of our pontificate."

Many cardinals and other illustrious persons added their letters of recommendation to those of the Pope, particularly Cardinal Ugolino, the protector of the order, who testified by a document addressed to all prelates, which certified the intimate knowledge he had of the virtues of the Founder and of his religious, and the great fruit that was to be expected from them for the propagation of the faith, and the benefit of the whole church. They made a great number of authenticated copies of these letters, in order to give to those whom Francis had resolved to send in all directions, even into the most distant lands.

Three things were decreed at this general chapter. The first was, that on every Saturday a solemn mass should be celebrated in honour of the immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary. This glorious title of Immaculate, which the general councils of the seventh and eighth centuries, and the ancient fathers of the Church, have given to Mary, has been used by the Council of Trent,(43) which has declared in its decree on the subject of original sin, "that it is not its intention to include therein the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God." The use which the Friars Minor made of it in 1219, shows clearly that they adopted, as did their sainted Patriarch, the common opinion of the Greek church, which was already spread in various parts of the Latin Church, in honour of the Conception of the

(43) Sess. 5, de Peccato Origin.

Blessed Virgin, because they thought it wholly pure and exempt from the stain of original sin. Their successors have always, with admirable zeal, maintained this opinion, which God in so far blessed, that they have had the advantage and consolation of seeing the Institution of the Feast of the Conception in the whole Church, by an Apostolic Constitution, (44) which the Council of Trent has renewed ; and many Sovereign Pontiffs (45) have declared to all the faithful that the object of the festival is to honour the Blessed Virgin under this opinion, that she was conceived without the stain of Original Sin, forbidding under severe penalties the writing or speaking to the contrary.

It is proper to notice here, that at the head of the Friars Minor, who supported the proposition of the Immaculate Conception, was the celebrated John Duns Scotus, so respected in the Church for his penetrating genius, for the solidity of his doc-

(44) Declarat hæc ipsa sancta Synodus, non esse suæ intentionis comprehendere in hoc decreto, ubi de peccato originali agitur, beatam et immaculatam Virginem Mariam, Dei Genitricem; sed observandas esse constitutiones felicis recordationis Sixti Papæ IV. sub pœnis in eis constitutionibus contentis, quas innovat. Concil. Trident. Sess. 5, de Peccato Originali.

(45) Alexander VII. has collected in his Constitution, Solicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum of the 3rd of December, 1661, all that had been done by his predecessors on the subject of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. We see clearly therein, what the Roman Church thinks upon it. There are on this subject several excellent Latin treatises ; the most complete one in French is that of M. Trevet, the Curé of Gonnecour in Normandy, printed at Rome in 1709. It is a refutation of the prescriptions published in 1676, by M. de Launoi, who is a furious opponent of the Mystery of the Conception, notwithstanding the prohibition of the Holy See.

trine, and for his singular piety. He silenced his opponents, and his success was so manifest that it was considered that he had the special protection of the Blessed Virgin, (40) and his reasonings was so convincing that the University of Paris admitted them, and declared in favour of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which it has maintained ever since. In the fifteenth century the faculty of Theology passed a solemn decree on this point, in which it declared that in consonance with the opinions of its predecessors, and in order to oppose the enemies of the Blessed Virgin, it bound itself by oath to maintain the proposition that the Mother of God was preserved from Original Sin; framing a law, not to receive any doctor who should not take this oath; which is continued to the present day.

In this is the pious triumph of the Sons of St. Francis, who, in gratitude for so singular a privilege, honour the Blessed Virgin as the Patroness and Protectress of their Order, under the title of her Immaculate Conception, and by celebrating the festival thereof with every possible solemnity.

The second statute directed, that express mention should be made of the names of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the prayer, "Protege nos Domine, &c.," and in another which begins with these words

(46) Wading relates on the testimony of many authors, and on the tradition of the city of Paris, that Scot, about to discourse in support of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, prayed first before one of her pictures, and that the picture bowed its head to confirm his reasoning. From the same tradition we learn that the picture in question is the one which is seen with its head bowed down at the door of the lower chapel of the palace at Paris. Wading. ad ann. 1209.

—"Exaudi nos Deus," &c., in memory of what had been revealed to St. Francis, that these apostles interceded powerfully with God for his institute. This was practised by the whole Church when Innocent IV. revised and reformed the Roman Breviary, through Aymon, an Englishman, (47) who was the fifth general of the Order of Friars Minor.

In the third statute it was said that poverty should be apparent in everything, in the convents which they should build; that the churches should be small and low, and that the walls of the rest of the buildings should be of wood or mud. Some difficulties were started to this; many represented that in their provinces wood was dearer than stone, and that walls of masonry, if they were not too high, would better denote poverty, because they would be solid and not compel frequent repair. The holy Founder would not argue this matter with them; for it is remarked that not to give rise to any dispute, and not to give scandal to the weak, he often condescended to the opinions of others in similar matters. Nevertheless he recommended to them all, not to receive either churches or houses which were not in conformity to holy poverty which was their rule.

It was not possible always to follow out his intentions. The prelates and princes who were greatly attached to his Order had beautiful convents built, which his religious could not avoid

(47) Wading. ad ann. 1244, n. 2.

receiving; and St. Bonaventure even says that a numerous community which has different exercises to perform, require large houses, (48) although care should be taken that holy poverty should be apparent throughout, and that superfluity should not preponderate over what is reasonably necessary.

The Chapter being ended, Francis following the example of the apostles, divided the world among his brethren, in order to bring it all in subjection to the Empire of Jesus Christ. After long prayer according to his custom, he made known to them that he took for himself and twelve of his companions, Syria and Egypt. He named Benedict, of Arezzo, for Greece; Giles and Electe for Africa, with others whom he associated to them. As the greater part of Spain groaned under the domination of the Saracens, he added to those whom he had before sent there, John Parent, and more than a hundred new missionaries, in order that they might spread themselves into all parts. Into Provence, into France, and into the Low Countries he sent the same as before. For Gascony, in particular, he selected Christopher, a religious who had the simplicity of a dove, and who died at Cahors, and whose miracles have rendered his memory celebrated.

Angelo, of Pisa, was appointed Provincial in England, whither he was to take many more apostolic workmen. The Patent which was furnished him was very short; the following is the tenor of it, such as it is found at Mount Alvernia: "I, Bro-

(48) S. Bonav. Determin in regul. S. Fran. quæsi 6.

ther Francis of Assisi, Minister General, command you, Brother Angelo, of Pisa, to go to England, there to take upon yourself the office of Provincial: Adieu! Brother Francis, of Assisi."

The first mission to Germany had not been successful. Those who had been sent thither by the preceding Chapter, not knowing the language, and answering badly the questions put to them, were suspected from their poor and unusual habit to belong to those heretics who were prosecuted in Italy, in consequence of which they were cruelly ill-treated and driven away. The recital which they gave on their return, made Germany so unpopular among the brethren, that they said that none ought to go there but such as aspired to martyrdom, and that many prayed to heaven to be preserved from the ferocity of the Germans. Francis did not think proper to send any more there till such time as he should have received some novices from thence who might go there with others; but he sent some into Hungary.

He selected for the distant missions the most talented of his brethren, and the most perfect in virtue, and he gave them excellent instructions as to the exercise of their missions. He likewise added to the authentic copies of the Papal Bull, and of the recommendations of the Cardinals, three other letters which he addressed to the ecclesiastics, to the magistrates, and to the Superiors of the Order. They are so edifying that we deem it useful to insert them here. This is the first:—

"To my Reverend lords in Jesus Christ, all the Ecclesiastics who are over the whole world, and who live in the Catholic faith, Brother Francis their lowly servant, sends greeting, and kisses their feet.

"Being indebted to all the world, and my infirmities not permitting me to discharge in your regard what I owe, I beg you to receive with great charity what I lay before you in these few words. Let us reflect, all of us who are in the condition of clergymen, on the great sin which some commit through ignorance, against the very holy Body, and the very holy Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and against the very holy words with which they are consecrated; for we know that His Body and His Blood can only be present after the pronunciation of the words which consecrate them. We have and we see nothing of this most High Lord, which is real and sensible in this world, but His Body and His Blood, and His words, which have served to redeem us, and to make us pass from death to life, as it is by His word that we were created.

"Nevertheless, let all those who celebrate these sacred mysteries, and in particular those who do so without due discernment, consider what is in many places the meanness of the chalices in which they consecrate, and the corporals and other linen which are used in the holy Sacrifice; with what indignity the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ is placed, deserted, carried, and received by some and administered by others. Sometimes, even His name and His written word are cast under

foot and trodden on ; so true it is that the sensual man perceiveth not the things which are of the spirit of God. (49)

" Does religion not awaken us to the outrages offered to this Lord, full of goodness, who places Himself in our hands, whom we touch, and whom we receive daily in the holy communion ? Are we ignorant, that we shall one day fall into His hands ? Let us therefore, correct these defects, together with all others, never again to fall into them.

" Wherever we find the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ inconveniently deposited, let it be removed and enclosed with great reverence and care. So also, if His name or words, are found scattered about, let them be collected and placed in some decent place. We know that we ought to attend to all these things, according to the order that the Lord has given us on these points, and according to the decrees issued by our holy mother the Church. Whosoever shall fail in this, let him know, that on the day of judgment, he will be made responsible for it to our Lord Jesus Christ.

" Those who shall cause this writing to be copied in order to spread it quickly, and to cause it to be practically attended to, let them be assured that God will bless them. May our Lord Jesus Christ fill you, and fortify you by His grace, all you ecclesiastics who are my Lords."

We must perceive from this, that St. Francis, with all his evangelical simplicity, had considera-

(49) 1 Cor. ii. 9.

ble acquired knowledge. He speaks as a correct theologian, of the consecration which can only be performed by the words of Jesus Christ. (50) He exacts, as did Origen, and St. Augustine, that equal respect shall be paid to His words, as to His Body. (51) The authority which He points out to prove how much the name of God is to be respected, as is His word, and all that serves for His worship, show that he was well versed in the Holy Scriptures, (52) and that he was instructed in the Ordinances of the Canon Law. (53) We may also conjecture with Wading, that being very zealous in promoting cleanliness and decency in everything about the altar, and for the suitable administration of the Eucharist, and being, moreover, highly esteemed by the Pope, it was he who induced Honorius III. to make the

(50) This is what theologians generally teach, grounded on the sacred Scriptures, on tradition, on the liturgies, on the authority of the holy Fathers, Greek and Latin, on the doctrine of the Councils, and on the strongest reasoning which the Greeks at the Council of Florence acknowledge that they could not but admit. It would be useless to endeavour to renew and support the peculiar opinion that the form of the Eucharistic consecration does not consist alone in the sole words of Jesus Christ, and that the prayer or invocation is an essential part thereof. The proofs of this opinion are too weak, and the consequences may be dangerous. Council of Florence, page 1163 and 1164, tom. 13, Collect. Concil. See Refutation de la Dessertation, &c, by the R. P. Bougeant, of the Society of Jesus, at d'Houry's, 1727.

(51) Orig. Hom. 13 in Exod. S. August. vel Cæsar, Arel. Sermon 300 n. 2 in Append. tom 5 Oper. S. Aug. Vad. annot. in Epist. 15 S. Francisci.

(52) Levit. xiv. 12; xxi. 6; xx. 1 et seq. Deuter. vi. 6 et seq. Isai. lii. 11. Ezech. xxii. 26 et alibi. 1 Cor. xi. 27 and 28.

(53) De Consecr. Dist. 1 cap. Nemo. cap. Altaris. cap. Vestiment. cap. Vasa, cap. Ut calix. et alibi.

rule on this head, which is found in the decretals. (54)

The mere title of his letter deserves attention. He addresses it to the ecclesiastics, who live in the Catholic faith; and as he expresses it in his will, according to the form of the Roman Church; from which it may be concluded, that he did not desire to write to such as were heretics, or in schism, following in that the doctrine of St. Paul, (55) who warns his disciple, Titus, to hold no communication with them, and that of St. John, who forbids receiving them into our houses, or even to greet them.(56) The light and the purity of his faith were sufficient to inspire him with these sentiments, but the acquaintance he had of the apostolical constitutions give us room to think that he was guided also by the two celebrated canons, (57) which our holy Father Benedict XII. when Archbishop of Benevento quoted in his second letter to the Cardinal de Bissy, against those who did not pay due obedience to the Holy Roman Church, and prevented others to submit to it.(58)

The letter which Francis addressed to the magistrates was couched in these terms:—

To all the Powers, Governors, Consuls, Judges, Magistrates, who are in the whole earth, and to

(54) Decret. Greg. Noni, cap. sané. de celebr. Miss.
(55) Tit. iii. 10. (56) 2 John x.

(57) Canon. Si Romanorum. Dist. xix. 1. Canon. Nulli fas est Dist. xix. 5.

(58) Recueil de Lettres dans l'instruction pastorale de M. le Cardinal de Bissy, 1722, page 132.

all others who may receive these letters; Brother Francis, your lowly and despicable servant in our Lord, sends greeting, and wishes you peace.

"Consider attentively that the day of death is at hand; for which reason I entreat you with all the respect in my power, not to forget God, in the midst of the embarrassments caused by the affairs of the world, nor to violate His Commandments; for all those who shall withdraw from the Lord, are accursed, and He will forget them.(59) On the day of their death, all that they appeared to have will be taken from them; the more they shall have been learned and powerful in this world, the more will they be tormented in hell. I advise you, therefore, my lords, above all things, to enter on a sincere course of penance,(60) to receive humbly and with love, the most sacred Body, and the most holy Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in memory of His Passion; to refer to God the honour He has done you, in confiding to you the guidance of His people, and to cause every night some signal to be made to give notice to all, to honour the Lord Almighty, and to return Him thanks. If you fail in this, take notice that you will be called to account for it at the day of judgment. Those who shall keep this writing at their homes, and act up to what it contains, will receive God's blessing."

There are many things in this letter worthy of

(59) Psalm cxviii. 21; Osee ii. 6; Math. xxv. 19; Sap. vi. 7.

(60) Wading quotes the manuscript from which he has taken these words which are not found in others, but which must have been in the original. Note 5, in Epist. 15, S. Francisci.

notice, and which are not less salutary for the instruction of the faithful, than honourable to St. Francis.

1. The man of God has no condescension for the false delicacy of worldlings, who cannot bear to hear death spoken of; he begins by telling them that death is at hand, in order to bring them more efficaciously to repentance. So it is that preachers should announce, without any human respect, the salutary truths which displease their hearers; thus they should speak of purity where licentiousness is common; of restitution where fraud and usury are found; of charity in opposition to the harshness of the rich; of submission to the Church, where there is the spirit of resistance to its decisions, and so of the rest.

2. He exhorts to frequent communion those persons who are engaged in worldly affairs, because in the midst of the difficulties and embarrassments which are inseparable from them, they may live in such manner as to be in a state to participate frequently in the divine mysteries, which is what is in conformity to the intention of Jesus Christ, and the spirit of the church. It is upon this principle that the children of St. Francis have laboured and greatly contributed to re-establish among the faithful the frequent use of communion.

Wading thinks that the saint (61) in exhorting to the frequentation of communion, names the Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ separately,

(61) Annot. 6, in Epist. S. Francisci.

because he had in view communion under the two species, (62) which in his time was still given in some churches, and even in the time of St. Thomas of Aquin. But it may be said, that it was from a pure and tender devotion for the precious Blood, the effusion of which has redeemed us, and that it is an article of faith, that we receive it with the Body when we communicate under the sole species of bread.

3. It is to the zeal of St. Francis, that we are indebted in some measure for the pious custom of ringing a bell at night to collect the faithful in the churches for the purpose of prayer; since his days it has been practised in Italy. St. Charles Borromeo, (63) in the fourth council of Milan, considers it as an ancient custom. Many other countries of Europe have followed it, and we see with edification that it is observed with tolerable regularity in France, both in the towns and in the country. Those who cannot attend this public prayer, ought in the opinion of St. Charles, to collect their families in the evening to pray together; our fathers used to do so, and why should their children fail in so doing?

4. The advice which the saint gives to the magistrates, to refer the honour they have re-

(62) The communion under one sole species of bread for the laity, was the practice of the Church from the earliest ages on many occasions, and was generally adopted with similar wisdom by the Council of Constance, as Bossuet, the learned bishop of Meaux, demonstrates, with the same precision and solidity as is found in his other works against the Protestants. Traité de la Communion sous les deux espéces, 1682.

(63) 3, Part. quæst. 80, art. 12.

ceived to God, and to take care to cause Him to be honoured, comprises all the extent of that maxim of Christianity, which lays down, that religion is the principal object of government and policy; that (64) temporal authority, which emanates from God, should have nothing more at heart than to cause Him to be served, to protect the church, to support her decisions, to preserve her discipline, and to put a stop, by the severity of laws, to all novelties, which are contrary to the purity of faith, and to everything which tends to the corruption of morals.

The holy patriarch wrote as follows to the superiors of his order:

"To all the Wardens of the Friars Minor, (65) who shall see these letters, Brother Francis, the lowest of the servants of God, greets them, and wishes them peace in our Lord.

"Know that there are high and sublime things before God, which man considers sometimes as mean and despicable; (66) and that there are others, on the contrary, which men highly esteem, and which are very contemptible in the eyes of God. I entreat you, as forcibly as I am able, before the Lord our God, to deliver to the bishops

(64) Conc. Mediol. 4, part 1, chap. 24, de Orat.

(65) Three excellent works have been written on this subject, in which this truth has been clearly proved. The first is Traité dogmatique et historique des Edit. &c., by Father Thomassin, priest of the Oratory, printed at the royal press, in 1705. Traité de la police, by M. de la Mare in 1705. Politique tirée de l'Ecriture Sainte, a posthumous work of Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, printed in 1709.

(66) That is to say, provincial ministers, as will be seen by what follows.

and other ecclesiastics, the letters which treat of the most holy Body and of the most holy Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to bear well in mind what we have recommended to you relative to this mystery. Be careful also to have the other letters copied, and to have them distributed as soon as possible, to the governors, consuls, and magistrates, in which they are warned to take care that the praises of God be publicly celebrated. I greet you in our Lord."

He explains in the first place in this letter, (68) two principles which were taught by Jesus Christ, and by St. Paul, as to the different way in which God and man judge of things, and without making any particular application of what he had adverted to, he immediately goes on to say : "I entreat you to deliver my letters to the ecclesiastics and magistrates." It was as much as to say to those with equal discernment and humility : "Although my letters are written in a very simple style, and in that view of them they may appear to you not calculated to make much impression on those to whom they are addressed, and to procure for you their protection ; nevertheless, do not fail to deliver them, for God may use them to touch their hearts more efficaciously than more eloquent discourses." And in effect they did touch the hearts of those who read them, who entreated the Friars Minor to accept houses which they offered them without waiting to be asked for them.

(67) 1 Cor. i. 25 ; Luke xvi. 15.

(68) Wading, note 2, in Epist. 14, S. Francisci.

As soon as the several missions had been fixed upon, and authenticated copies of all the letters had been delivered to each of the parties, the missionaries prepared to set out. Before we give an account of St. Francis' voyage to the Levant, we think it desirable to give an abridgement of what his children did in various parts of the world, because the principal glory is due to him, and these proceedings naturally belong to the history of his life.

Benedict, of Arezzo, embarked with his companions for Greece, where their preaching, backed by the holiness of their lives, and confirmed by miracles, produced abundance of fruit, for the salvation of souls, and procured so many houses for the Order that in a very short time it was formed into an entire province, and was called Romania.

Giles and Electe, who anxiously aspired to martyrdom, and who were only lay brothers, had appeared to St. Francis to be more adapted to send to the Saracens than even those of the clergy, and they hastened to go into Africa with several others. What chiefly animated the zeal of brother Giles, as the author of his life remarks, was his having heard that the Saracens treated with great cruelty those Christians who spoke ill of the law of Mahomet. (69) When he reached Tunis with a party of missionaries, he generously preached the faith in public, and this continued for some time. A person who was looked up to among the Sara-

(69) Act. SS. 23 April. vit. beat. Œgid. cap. 2. n. 8.

cens for his great wisdom, having come forth from his retreat, told the people that they ought to put to the sword all those infidels who spoke against the law of their prophet. Giles and his companions were delighted at the prospect of an early martyrdom ; but the Christians with whom they had their domicile, fearing lest they might be included in the massacre, took away these preachers and compelled them to go on board a vessel in the harbour, and did not permit them again to land. As they did not give over addressing the Mahometans who crowded to the sea shore, to induce them to embrace the faith of Jesus Christ, and their desire was so ardent to sacrifice their lives for His glory, the Christian residents hast ened to have them removed to Europe; thus seeing that even their fellow-believers were opposed to their views, they returned to Italy.

Electe was more fortunate ; during some years he performed the functions of an apostle, in another town in Africa, where he received the crown of martyrdom. A body of Saracens rushed upon him while he was preaching, upon which he fell upon his knees, grasped the Rule with both his hands, asked pardon for his faults from God, and from his companions, and then presented his neck to the infidels, who took away his life ; this did not happen till after the death of St. Francis. He had entered the Order when very young, and had lived in it with great austerity, always wearing a coat of mail on his bare body, so that he prepared himself for the martyrdom of blood by

the martyrdom of penance, as was recommended to the Christians in time of persecution. (70)

Those who went into Spain with John Parent, proceeded with so much speed, that ten of them arrived at Saragossa by the feast of the Assumption; a very short time after their departure, Bernard de Quintavalle, who was sent into this kingdom after the Chapter of 1216 had established two convents, the one at Toledo, the other at Carrion de los Condes, a town in the kingdom of Leon. Some of his companions had been admitted at Lerida, and at Balaguer, in Catalonia, under very extraordinary circumstances, which are omitted not to be too prolix. Zachary and Gautier, who had been sent into Portugal, had had much to suffer in the beginning; but Queen Urraqua, the wife of Alphonso II., who then reigned, was a most pious princess, and having caused their institute to be examined by very learned men, and having had full assurance of the holiness of their lives, she obtained leave from the king for their being received into his states, and permission for their building convents. A house was given them, with a chapel attached to it, of St. Anthony, near Coimbra, where the court then was, and subsequently one on a larger scale at Lisbon. Princess Sancia, the daughter of Sancho I., and sister of Alphonso II., highly praised by historians for her piety and chastity, protected Zachary, and gave him a third house, called of St. Catherine, at some distance from

(70) Tertul. ad Mart. cap. 3, et de cult. femin. cap. 13, S. Cyprian de Laps. cap. 3, et seq.

the town of Alenquer, which was her own ; but in consequence of the distance, and the insalubrity of the air, she some years after converted her own palace into a convent, which she gave to the Friars Minor. Gautier, one of Bernard's, companions, who had made many great conversions by his virtues and his miracles, near Guimaraens, had built a convent not very far from that town.

While they were in that of St. Catherine a singular thing occurred, which we have not thought right to omit here on account of the instruction it contains. One of the ladies in waiting on the princess, whose name was Maria Garçia, often came to have some pious conversation with one of the holy Religious, who was very averse from receiving her, because he feared the company of females. One day when he was at prayer, she came to the church, and expressed a wish to see him, but he refused to go to her. The historian says, that in order to obtain what she wished for, she did what women generally do under such circumstances, she became more importunate, and cried bitterly, and protested that it would give her great pain if she might not speak to the holy man. He therefore came, to get rid of her importunities ; but he brought some straw in one hand, and some fire in the other, he set the straw on fire in her presence, and then said to her : "Although, Madam, all your conversations are pious, I refuse to hold them with you in private, because what you see has happened to the straw, is what religious persons have to fear

may occur to them if they have private and familiar intercourse with women; and at least they lose the fruits of their holy communications with God in prayer." The lady blushed, retired, and troubled him no more. St. Jerome, who so strongly recommended to ecclesiastics and religious, to avoid conversations with the female sex, would certainly have approved of this action. (71)

What we have just related was the fruit of Bernard de Quintavalle's mission, and that of his companions, in Spain and Portugal, from the year 1261.

John Parent arrived at Saragossa in the month of August, 1219, with nine of his brethren, who were followed by many others soon after; he addressed himself to the Bishop and to the magistrates, who assembled to hear him. He explained to them who Francis of Assisi was, his vocation, his mission, his mode of life, his Institute, the approbation given to his Rule by Pope Innocent III., and Honorius III., and the testimonials given to him by several Cardinals. He remarked to them that the new Order had been exceedingly multiplied in a very few years, and that they had seen more than five thousand religious at the general Chapter which had been lately assembled in the neighbourhood of Assisi, which was considered to be miraculous; that their Father had sent a great number of his children into all parts of the world, to combat vice

(71) S. Hieron. Epist. ad Nepot. 34, alias 2, et ad Rustic 95 alias 4.

and encourage virtue, which circumstance should be considered as a bountiful effect of Divine Providence towards His Church, in such calamitous times. He concluded by saying: "If our Institute is agreeable to you, we earnestly entreat you to give us some small place in which we may recite the Divine Office, and fulfil the other ministries which our Founder has recommended to us. Have no anxiety as to our subsistence, for we solicit no part of your goods; we content ourselves with very little; we are poorly clad; work and questing furnish us with all that we require."

All the assembly admired the spirit of humility which prevailed through this discourse, and the reading of the Papal Bull, with the testimonials of the Cardinals, were proofs that nothing had been set forth but what was true. But when they had read the letters which Francis had addressed to the Bishops and Magistrates, they conceived such a liking to the Order, that they took immediate measures for giving to John Parent and his companions a dwelling, of which they took possession on the 28th of August.

The Order of St. Francis, as well as that of St. Dominic, began from that time to spread through all Spain. (72) On all sides preachers of the two Orders were found, and new convents were erected, as Luke, Bishop of Tuy, a contemporary author, mentions in his Chronicle when he speaks of the marvels of the reign of St. Ferdinand, king of Castile and Leon. It would clearly ap-

(72) Luc. Tud. chron. pag. 123. Hisp. illustr. tom. 4. Id. de altera vita, &c., lib. 3, cap. 9 and 14. Biblioth. Patr. tom. 25, Edit. Lugd. 1577.

pear that both the one and the other were in the city of Leon about that time, since the same author in his excellent work against the Albigenses, says that they exerted themselves with great zeal and energy against the heretics, who, to seduce the faithful, published pretended miracles which they asserted to have been performed by the bones of one Arnold (73) a man of their sect who had been dead sixteen years, and accused the ecclesiastics and religious, who exposed their impostures, of heresy. Such is the mode adopted by certain sectarians; they endeavoured to establish their false doctrine by fictitious miracles; (74) while they insolently refused credence to those which the Catholic Church admitted as certain; and all have sufficient audacity to treat as

(73) There is another Arnold, a native of Brescia, who was a disciple of Abelard, who was the chief of the Arnoldists; against whom S. Bernard wrote to Pope Innocent II. and to bishops, and who was hanged and burnt at Rome in the year 1155. There was also an Arnold of Villeneuve, a celebrated physician, a thorough fanatic, whose errors were condemned by the Inquisition and by the Faculty of Theology at Paris, in the year 1300, &c. S. Bernard Epist. 189, 193 and 196. Marian. Hist. Hispan. lib. 14, cap. 9. Hist. Univer. Paris. tom. 4 pag. 120 and 121.

(74) God, who is truth itself, and the sole Author of true miracles, can never perform any to authorise error. But He sometimes performs some among the heretics and by their hands, to confirm Catholic truths. As He did one in favour of baptism in the church of Paul, a Novatian bishop, as related by the historian Socrates, lib. 7, cap. 17. See on this head the Pastoral Instruction of the bishop of Soissons, p. 14, and seq. and the Abbé de Tournely, Prælect. Theol. de Incarnation, in which they quote several passages from the Fathers, and the following one from S. Thomas. A malis qui falsam doctrinam enuntiant, nunquam fiunt vera miracula ad confirmationem suæ doctrinæ; quamvis quandoque fieri possunt ad commendationem nominis Christi quem invocant et virtute Sacramentorum quæ exhibent. 2, 2, quæst. 178, art. 2, ad 3.

heretics the orthodox who prove them to be heretics themselves.

The mission to France was equally successful with that of Spain. (75) Pacifico and his companions, who began it in 1216, were exposed to hunger, cold, and all other kinds of inconveniences, which men are exposed to suffer when out of their own country, unknown, and destitute of everything, and moreover living an unusual and extraordinary sort of life. They went to that office of the night which is called matins in those churches in which it is said at midnight, as is still the custom at Nôtre Dame, in Paris. If there was no service in the places where they were, they then prayed by themselves at that hour, and they passed the whole night at the foot of the altar; after which, if no one offered them a meal, they went questing from door to door. The remainder of the day was spent in the hospitals, making the beds of the lepers and other sick, dressing their wounds and rendering them such other services of humility and charity as they had learned from the example and instruction of their Father Francis. So saintly a life attracted the attention of all, gained their esteem, caused many to embrace the Institution, and procured for them many establishments.

The most considerable was that of Paris, which was situated some years after in the very place where the great convent of the Observantines is now. The abbot and the community of St. Ger-

(75) Wading, ad ann. 1216. n. 9, et ad ann. 1219, n. 41. Hist. Eccles. Parisien. lib. 15, cap. 3, n. 2.

main-des-Prés gave this locality to the Friars Minor, to remain there as their guests, (76) from which we see that the children of St. Benedict, who favoured those of St. Francis in France, entered into the spirit of the Rule, which prohibited their possessing anything as property. The charity of the religious of this abbey went still further; they bought with their own money from the canons of St. Merry, a piece of ground attached to the enclosure of the house in order to accommodate their guests. The cession was confirmed by the famous Bishop of Auvergne, William of Paris, in 1230.

Wading says (77) that in 1234 (78) the king St. Louis purchased this property from the Benedictines, and gave it, free from all ground rent to

(76) Hist. of the city of Paris, tom. 1, page 284. Hist. of the Abbey of S. Germain-des-Prés. page 119, art. 49. Ut ibi maneant tanquam hospites. The author of the History of the City of Paris printed in 1725, tom. 1, liv. 6, p. 235, makes an observation contrary to the Decretal of Pope Nicholas III., Exiit qui seminatt, in which all are excommunicated who alter the sense.

(77) He says, moreover, that the act of acquisition, which is dated in the month of April 1234, and sealed with the seal of S. Lewis, is in the Abbey of S. Germain-des-Prés. Father du Bois, priest of the oratory, in his History of the Church of Paris, liv. 15, ch. 3, n. 2, says, that it was another house in the same locality which was ceded to the religious of S. Francis, by the religious of the Abbey, and that S. Louis in exchange, remitted to the Abbey a quit rent of a hundred sous of Paris, which they had to pay the king for a right of fishing, which he had granted to them. De Breuil relates the same thing in the second book of the Antiquities of Paris, which is quoted by the Abbé Dubois; and it is again found in the Hist. of Paris, tome 1, p. 285. Nevertheless, nothing of all this is noticed in the History of the Abbey of S. Germain-des-Prés, printed in 1724, wherein we find noticed things relative to the convent of the Observance, which might as well have been omitted.

(78) Ad ann. 1234, n. 16.

the Friars Minor, and that he caused some considerable building to be erected upon it, and particularly a large and beautifully decorated church, which was dedicated by the title of St. Mary Magdalen. We know by history and by incontestible documents, that this pious king, and Queen Blanche, his mother, had the greatest esteem for the religious of the Order of St. Francis, and loaded them with favours. In 1240 the abbot and community of St. Germain-des-Prés, in compliance with a Brief of Pope Gregory IX. agreed to sell two pieces of land to enlarge the enclosure of the Friars Minor, which were purchased by certain pious individuals, at a valuation which was placed upon them by Adam, Bishop of Senlis. King Philip-le-Bel added another piece of land in 1298 ;(79) and in the year 1561, the Magistrates of the Hotel-de-Ville, added to these, in consideration of the good services of these religious against the Huguenots, and for the defence of the faith.

The splendid church,(80) the precious memorial of the piety of St. Louis, (81) and of his esteem for the Order of St. Francis, was accidentally entirely reduced to ashes, on the 19th November, 1580, to the great regret of the Catholics, while the

(79) Wading remarks that some citizens of Paris had likewise purchased some pieces of land to add to those which Philip le Bel had added to the Order.

(80) Wading, ad. ann. 1234, n. 21.

(81) It was three hundred and twenty feet long, by ninety broad, It was magnificently ornamented, and there were some splendid mausoleums of princes and princesses, and other persons of the highest rank. De Breuil, Antiquités de Paris, 1234, n. 23.

Huguenots who were in the habit of defiling the altars, and setting the sanctuaries on fire, irritated to the highest pitch at the success of the Friars Minor against their heresy, in their sermon, and in their controversial works, rejoiced at the conflagration and triumphed at it, as the Idumeans at the taking of Jerusalem, (82) who would have wished that its very foundations should be rooted out.

This misfortune had scarcely happened, than King Henry III., the princes, magistrates, and the municipality, deliberated upon rebuilding the Church, and contributed to that effect. (83) They began to work at it the following year, by the zeal and assiduity of the illustrious Christopher de Thou, first President of the Parliament, whose science, equity, piety, blameless life, and great talents had secured to him the esteem of his Sovereigns, the love of the people, and the respect of the whole world ; and whose memory has been transmitted to posterity in the writings of the most learned men in Europe, whom he loved and protected.

The Order of St. Francis, chose, in 1600, for their temporal Father and protector, in the whole kingdom, John Augustus de Thou,(84) President "au mortier," and son of the above, so celebrated for his integrity, his wisdom, and learning, and who joined to the functions of his office, and to the political affairs which were confided to him by

(82) Psalm 135, 1. 9 and 10.
(83) Wading, ad. ann. 1234, n. 22.
(84) Memoire hist. Diction. n. hist.

Henry III. and Henry IV., an arduous labour, the fruits of which was the magnificent history of his own times, a work quite on a par with anything written by the ancients. This excellent magistrate, whose piety and family propensity attached him greatly to the Friars Minor, caused the sacred edifice, which his father had begun, to be continued, and brought to perfection.

Angelo of Pisa, one of the missioners sent by St. Francis, was the first warden of the Parisian convent. This convent soon became a college, where young men, from all parts of the world came to study, and subsequently, to take out degrees in the university. Several great men (85) have, in the last five hundred years, rendered this college illustrious, and its renown is still kept up by doctors, whose inviolable attachment to the Holy See, and to the Episcopate, at a time when the Church has been greatly agitated, must render them dear to all who are zealous for the faith. No one will find fault with our having spoken at some length, of the establishment which was made in the capital of France, while recording the acts of the first missions sent into that country by the holy Founder of the Order of the Friars Minor, nor that we have noticed the gratitude due to their benefactors, and done justice to their learned and orthodox doctors;

(85) Alexander d'Halés (d'Hals), John de la Rochelle, S. Bonaventure, Richard de Middleton, in Latin Media Villa, William Warren, John Scot, Nicolas de Lyra, Francis Mayronis, Peter Auréole, and numbers of others, in the preceding centuries, and in the present century.

on this last head, De Breuil,(86) in the antiquities of Paris,(87) expresses himself energetically, and very honourably as to the great convent of the Observantines.

Pacifico, whom St. Francis had appointed provincial of the French missions, sent some of the religious into different parts of the kingdom, where they were well received. He went with some companions into Hainault, and other provinces of the Low Countries, where, by the liberality and under the protection of the Countess of Flanders, Joanna of Constantinople, he caused many houses to be built. Those of Sens, in Artois, of St. Tron, in the province of Liege, of Valenciennes, Arras, Ghent, Bruges, and Oudenarde, were among his first. We may read in the history of the modern heresies what the Friars Minor have done and suffered in the Low Countries for the support of the faith.

Thomas de Chantpré,(88) a Canon Regular of St. Austin, and subsequently a Religious of the Order of St. Dominic, states, as an eye witness, a very marvellous thing, which deserves to be recorded in the life of St. Francis, since it occurred during his lifetime, relative to his order. At Thorouth, a town in Flanders, a child of five

(86) Since the work of De Bréuil enlarged by Malingre is the ground work of the History of Paris, printed in the year 1724, he should not have omitted in the five volumes, what he had thought himself obliged to say in a single one in favour of a celebrated house.

(87) 2nd book page 240, of Malingre's edition of 1640.

(88) Cantipratè lib. 2, de Apibus cap. 28, Meyerus ad ann. 1220. Molan, ad 11, Julii.

years of age, whose name was Achaz, of a good family, having seen in 1219 the habit of the Friars Minor, (89) begged his parents to give him a similar one. His entreaties and tears induced them to gratify him. He was therefore habited as a Friar Minor, with a coarse cord and bare feet, not choosing to have any money, not even to touch it, and he practised as much as was in his power the exercises of the religious. Among his companions he was seen to act the preacher, cautioning them against evil, exciting them to virtue by the fear of the pains of hell, and by the hopes of the glories of heaven ; teaching them to say the Lord's Prayer, and the Angelic Salutation, and to honour God by genuflections. He reproved such as did anything wrong in his presence, even his own father, if he heard him swear, or saw him in a state of inebriety. "My father," he would say, with tears in his eyes, "does not our curé tell us that those who do such things will not possess the kingdom of God?" (90) Being one day at Church with his mother, who was dressed in a handsome gown of a flame colour, he pointed out to her a crucifix, as a censure on her vanity, and warned her to be careful that the colour she wore did not cause her to fall into the flames of hell, which warning had so great an effect that his mother never after wore anything but the plainest dress. Such a precocious mind, with so much matured wisdom and piety, was universally admired, and every one

(89) Wading, ad ann. 1220, n. 66.
(90) Gal. v. 21.

took pleasure in seeing and listening to this amiable child.

God took him from this world before he had attained his seventh year. In his last illness, he confessed, and solicited most earnestly to be allowed to receive the holy communion. The curé not venturing to comply with his request, on account of his tender age, although his reason was so mature and his holiness so manifest, he raised his hands to heaven, and said in moving accents:—"My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou knowest that all that I wish for in this world is to receive Thee. I begged for Thee, and have done what I could; I hope with entire confidence that Thou wilt not deprive me of the happiness of possessing Thee." He then consoled and exhorted his parents and others who surrounded him, after which he gave up his pure soul to God, praising Him, and ejaculating prayers to Him.

The ocular witness adds two circumstances which are very remarkable; the first is, that the religious habit which this holy child wore disappeared, and could never afterwards be found. The second, that the Friars Minor who, as well as himself, went to pray at his grave, could not go through the *De profundis* which they had commenced, notwithstanding all the efforts that they made to do so; by which they understood, that so pure a soul stood in no need of prayer; and no doubt, they only endeavoured to offer up some under the impression that a mind so early in other respects matured, might have been capable of contracting some stain.

While the mission to France and the Low Countries made great progress under the direction of Pacificus, Christopher and his companion laboured successfully in Gascony, which they began by the establishment of the convent of Mirepoix, which the lords of the ancient and illustrious house of Lévi gave them with great marks of esteem. The religious, whom the holy patriarch had sent into Hungary, had at that time no success. They were so ill-treated, and so often stripped of their miserable clothing, that seeing no prospect of becoming useful, they returned into Italy. But they were indemnified for this in the year 1235, by Belus IV., King of Hungary, who settled the Friars Minor in his country, and employed them in his important affairs. Those who were destined for England, not having arrived there till the year 1220, because they stopped on their way at Paris, we shall only speak of them in that year.

Francis having dispatched his disciples to the several missions allotted to them, as had been said, prepared to go himself to the Levant, with a zeal equal to that with which he had inspired his brethren, when Cardinal Ugolino, the protector of the order, entered into discussion with him on the subject of the government of the establishment of St. Damian's, in which Clare presided, and of the other monasteries of females which had been commenced on that model, which were becoming numerous, as besides those in Italy, there was already one at Burgos, in Spain.

The holy patriarch replied in these terms to

the cardinal:—"I neither established, nor procured the establishment of any other monastery of females except the one in which I placed Clare to keep enclosure; and I have not taken upon myself the care of any other, either to attend to its regular discipline, or for its subsistence, which I and my companions will provide for by questing, as the state of poverty requires. Nothing has displeased me more, than the eagerness some of my brethren have had, to establish in other places houses for religious females, and to govern them; I am also much dissatisfied that they should have given them the name of Minors. I entreat you therefore, my lord, to remove my brethren, as much as possible, from the care of, and familiar intercourse with religious females, if you desire to preserve their good repute, and to see them increase in virtue; and to take measures to have these called either Poor Ladies, or Poor Recluses, until such time as a more appropriate name shall be hit upon."

Yielding to those reasons, and several others which Francis adduced, the cardinal, who was a man of great prudence, undertook to arrange this affair with the Pope, recommending him only most earnestly to take care of Clare and her companions. Francis did not fail in this; he bound himself to do so both verbally and by the following letter, which Clare takes notice of in her will.

"To my dear sister Clare, and to the other sisters of St. Damian, Francis, greets them in Jesus Christ:—

"Since by divine inspiration, you have become

daughters and servants of the Most High, the Sovereign King, and Celestial Father, and have chosen the Holy Spirit for your spouse, in order to live up to the perfection of the gospel; I will take upon myself and promise you to have always care of you, either personally or through my brethren, with as much solicitude and vigilance as for themselves. I greet you in our Lord."

The attention which the holy patriarch paid to the monastery of St. Damian, led his religious to think that they might assist the other monasteries which followed the same rule, without reflecting, that Clare and her companions, who first had embraced the high perfection of holy poverty, of which there were no precedents in previous ages, were deserving of peculiar distinction, and that the guidance of a single monastery could have no ill consequences. They were moreover urged to it by the advice of the bishops, and by the entreaties addressed to them, and were not adverse from it, from motives of charity towards virgins consecrated to Jesus Christ in a very austere state of life. But the saint who foresaw the embarrassment which this would cause to his order, and other inconveniences which might arise from it, dissuaded his brethren as much as he could, from these dangerous services, and often said energetically:—"I much fear that when God took wives from us, the devil gave us sisters." This short sentence comprises a profound meaning, which may serve for the instruction of all those who in the performance of the sacred ministry, are under

the necessity of having communications with persons of the other sex.

Cardinal Ugolino, by the advice and authority of the Pope, leaving to Francis the guidance of the monastery of St. Damian of Assisi, took upon himself the direction of all the others who had adopted that rule, and nominated as visitor-general under his orders, a prudent religious of the order of Citeaux, called Ambrose. He gave them the rule of St. Benedict, with constitutions, which Wading gives at length. We do not transcribe them here, because in the year 1224, St. Francis gave them another rule, which will be spoken of lower down, and which is the only one which ought to be called the rule of St. Clare or of the second order.

Ambrose having shortly after died, the same commission was given by the Pope, at the solicitation of the Cardinal Protector, to brother Philip the Long, one of Francis's companions, with power to nominate religious of his order, to regulate the monasteries in conformity to that of St. Damian. Philip had contrived to procure this appointment for himself, without having consulted the saint, and it was from a zealous motive for the perfection of the religious females, who did not in those times find many men capable of directing them in the kind of life which they had taken upon themselves. He thought that men who had undertaken a similar mode of life would be better calculated to instruct and govern them than such as only know the life theoretically. It must be admitted, that this is usually true, but

there are found worthy ecclesiastics of whom it may be said, as of St. Francis of Sales, that without being in the religious state they have its spirit: to say nothing of the grace of the ministry, which flows peculiarly on all directors who join to purity of faith, purity of morals, the exercise of prayer, the study of the Scriptures, and perfect disinterestedness, having no predilection for any one of the religious whom they direct.

However good Philip's intention may have been, Francis disapproved of his zeal, and said to him :— "Brother Philip, you have done wrong. Up to this time the fistula has only been in the flesh, and there were hopes of it being cured ; but now that it is in the bone, it is incurable."

He expressed his sentiments on this subject in a very energetic manner, by the penance he imposed on another of his companions, Stephen. As they were walking together on the banks of a river, this religious told him that he had been to one of these monasteries of females, by order of the visitor, but that he admitted having done so contrary to his intention and begged his pardon. The father reprehended him severely for it, and ordered him in expiation of his faults to plunge into the water with his habits on : it was in the month of December ; Stephen having instantly obeyed. "Extinguish," said Francis, "in this water those sparks of a dangerous but pleasing and insinuating fire ; wash in it, and cleanse thyself in it, from those secret stains which you have perhaps contracted without perceiving it." After, he continued his route, which

was still two miles before it was to end, going first, without turning to look at his companion who was dripping wet. When he reached the convent, he relaxed the rigour of his penance, speaking to him in soothing and charitable terms, and assisting him in drying his clothes. This action will only surprise those who know not to what lengths the saints carried the delicacy of their sentiments on the subject of the purity of the heart, and how easy it is to sully it.

However, what St. Francis said to Philip, when he told him, that he had rendered the wound incurable by imposing the guidance of the female monasteries on the Order, became prophetic. For the services they subsequently exacted from the Order, which they pretended were their due in consequence of the care which St. Francis had taken of the monastery of St. Damian, became so anxious, that a decree was passed at the general Chapter held at Pisa, in 1263, at which St. Bonaventure presided, to give them entirely up. Some powerful interest used on the Roman Court, prevented this decree from being acted upon, and the holy general, who saw the inconveniences which St. Francis had foreseen, and wished to have obviated, could not remedy them.

All the precaution he took was to have it authentically made known, and to have it declared by the Pope, that whatever the Friars Minor did for the good of the religious of St. Clare, was done out of pure charity, and nowise from duty; and in order that length of time might not give a claim of prescription, the nuns were obliged to

sign a document, the form of which was sent to them. Thus we must not imagine that the Order has any great predilection for their Government; it will be at any time glad to shake it off, if the Pope will but consent to its doing so. While this care is committed to the zeal of the Order, it will be necessary on our part for the nuns to behave themselves respectfully to those who exercise this charity in their regard; and on the other part, the religious must bear in mind that they have the guidance of a sex in which even in its devotions the characteristics of our first mother are to be feared.

The holy Patriarch being now about to set out in order to preach the Gospel to the Mahometans of the Levant, resolved to send to those who were in the west, some of his brethren. He chose six for Morocco; Vidal, a very prudent and pious religious, whom he nominated Superior; Berard de Carbio, from the vicinity of Narni, who was well versed in the Arabian language; Peter, of St. Geminien, and Otho, who were in priests' orders; and Ajut, and Accurse, who were lay brethren. (91) Having sent for them into the

(91) Bollandus, in the second tome of the Acts of the Saints for the month of January, page 62, n. 2, makes Wading say, ann., 1219, n. 48, eum (Berardum) Arabicæ linguæ ut cumque peritum concionatorem verò egregium fuisse. Nevertheless, the following is what we find in the same place in the annals of Wading, in the Lyons edition of 1625, and in that of 1644, which we have before us in writing this: Frater Berardus peritè callebat linguam Arabicam. We do not know whether it is a mistake which Fleury has followed in his Ecclesiastical History, book 78, n. 25, or whether there be some change in the other editions of Wading, which we have not seen.

presence of all the others, he spoke to them as follows :—

"My dear children, it is God who has commanded me to send you amongst the Saracens, to make known His faith, and refute the law of Mahomet. I shall go in a different direction to work for the conversion of the same infidels, and thus I shall send preachers over the whole earth. Prepare yourselves, therefore, to fulfil the will of the Lord. To render yourselves worthy of it, take great care to preserve peace and concord among yourselves, as the ever-subsisting ties of charity. Avoid envy, which was the first cause of the loss of mankind. (92) Be patient in tribulations, and humble in success ; which is the means of coming off victorious in all encounters. Imitate our Lord Jesus Christ, in His poverty, chastity, and obedience ; He was born poor, He lived poor, and it was in the bosom of poverty that He died. To manifest how highly He loved chastity, He chose to be born of a virgin, He took virgins for His first soldiers, (93) He kept, and counselled virginity, and He died in presence of two virgins. (94) As to obedience, He never ceased from practising it from His birth to His death on the Cross. Place your hopes in the Lord, He will guide and assist you. Take our rule with you, and a Breviary, in order that you may be punctual in saying the Divine Office, and be always submissive to Brother Vidal, your

(92) Wisdom ii. 24.
(93) Holy Innocents.
(94) His Blessed Mother and S. John the Evangelist.

Superior. My children, although I am greatly pleased to see the good will with which you embrace this undertaking, yet our separation is painful to my heart from the sincere affection I bear you ; but the commands of our Lord are to be preferred to my own feelings ; I entreat you to have the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ always present to your mind; it will strengthen you and powerfully animate you to suffer for His glory."

These Apostolic men, encouraged by this address of their Father, replied that they were ready to go into any country and expose themselves to the severest labours for the interests of the faith ; that he need not hold out an example to them, by going himself among the infidels, as if his word was not sufficient ; that they did not think his orders too strict, and that they expected assistance from above for carrying them into execution ; but that they required his prayers and blessing in order to gather some fruit in unknown lands, among barbarous people, enemies of the Christian name. "He," rejoined the saint, with great animation, "who sends you, it is He who will take care of you ; you are under His protection, under the protection of God ; you belong no more to me from this moment ; I tear you from my bosom to send you as His labourers." They threw themselves on their knees, kissed his hands and prayed for his last blessing, which he gave them, weeping, in the following terms :—"May the blessing of God the Father be upon you, as it descended on the Apostles ; may it strengthen you, guide you, and console you in your suffer-

ings. Fear not; the Lord is with you, as an invincible warrior; go, in the Name of God who sends you."

We shall speak of their voyage when we come to relate the martyrdom they suffered in Morocco, on the 16th of January, 1220.

At length Francis, anxious for the crown of martyrdom of which he had been twice disappointed, confided the government of his Order during his absence to Brother Elias, the Provincial of Tuscany, and set out on his voyage to Syria with twelve companions, the principal of whom were Peter of Catania, Barbaro Sabbatino, Leonard of Assisi, and Illuminus of Rieti.

In the Marches of Ancona through which they passed, in order to embark at the last-named place, a young man came to solicit to be received into the society of Friars Minor, and the saint said to him: "If you are in the intention of joining the Poor of Jesus Christ, go and bestow on other poor all that thou hast." The postulant went away and gave all he had to his parents, whom he loved very much, without giving any to the poor. He then returned and said how he had disposed of his property. Francis censured his conduct in the strongest terms, considering him as a man who would be totally useless, and nowise fit for evangelical perfection. "Tender brother," he said to him, (for so he called all those whom he considered good for nothing) "Tender brother, go thy ways, you have neither left your country nor your kindred; you have given what you had to your parents, and disappointed the poor; you

do not deserve to be received into the company of those who make profession of holy poverty. You commenced by the flesh, which is an unstable foundation for a spiritual edifice." This carnal and animal man, returned to his parents, resumed his property, and rather than give it to the poor, he gave up the good purpose he had entertained.

The love of his relations did as much dis-service to this young man as the love of riches did to him to whom our Saviour desired to sell all he had and give unto the poor. (95) Perhaps also he had an intention of finding a resource in what he gave to his relations, which is contrary to the entire renouncing of everything which Jesus Christ requires. For which reason, when St. Bonaventure relates this circumstance, he says, that St. Francis only admitted those into his Order who gave up all they had, and did not in any manner keep anything back.

The man of God received many novices on his way. Many of his brethren in the vicinity accompanied him as far as Ancona, to witness his embarcation; sorrowful, as had been the faithful of Miletus and Ephesus, who accompanied St. Paul embarking for Jerusalem, (96) although he had not told them, as the Apostle did, that they would see him no more. The arrival of this holy band was so agreeable to the Magistrates at Ancona, that they immediately allotted a spot for the erection of a convent, and had it commenced at their own expense. It was so large

(95) Math. xix. 21.
(96) Acts xx. 25 and 28.

that when Francis returned from Palestine he caused it to be reduced out of love for holy poverty, and gave the model of a church which is still extant with a larger one, which was added to it.

The captain of a vessel who was about to take succours to the Christian forces before Damietta, was so good as to receive him, one of twelve, on board his ship. All the religious who were there were desirous of going to sea with him, and each one vied for the preference, not only that they might accompany the Patriarch, but that they might obtain the crown of martyrdom, which they ardently wished for; but not to mortify any of them, and to show no preferences, he prudently and with the mildness of a common father, addressed them as follows:—

"My very dear children, there is not one of you, from whom I should wish to be separated; I wish you would all accompany me in the voyage I am about to make; but it would have been unreasonable in me to ask the captain of the vessel to take you all. On which account, and that none should have reason to complain, nor to be jealous of the others, I will not make the selection; it must be made by God." And thereupon calling a child who happened to be on board, he said: "The Lord has often made His will known by the mouth of children, and I have no doubt He will do the same now; let us ask this child, and let us credit what he shall say; God will speak through him." Then asking the child, whether it was God's will that all the religious who were

with him should put to sea and make the voyage with him? The child replied with a firm voice: "No, it is not God's will." He then again asked which of them among those who were there present he should take? The child, inspired by the Almighty, selected eleven, pointing them out with his finger, and going up to them as he named them.

The religious, full of astonishment, were all satisfied, those who were destined to remain behind as well as those who were selected to accompany him. They fell on their knees, received the blessing of their common Father, and separated after having given to each other the Kiss of Peace.

Francis embarked with his eleven companions; they weighed anchor, and shortly after they reached the island of Cyprus, where they remained a couple of days. In this interval one of the religious committed a fault which was soon atoned for. In a gust of passion he made use of some harsh expression to one of his brethren before the others, and before another person who might have been scandalized at the scene. Reflecting on what he had done, and being immediately sorry for it, he took up some dung, and returning to the spot, he put it into his mouth, and began chewing it, saying, "It is but just that he who has offended his brother by his speech, should have his mouth filled with filth." This act of penance was fully satisfactory to him who had been offended, and made such impression on the gentleman who had witnessed the scene, that he

offered himself and all he possessed to the service of the order.

From Cyprus, Francis proceeded to Acre,(97) from whence he sent his companions, two and two, into such parts of Syria in which missionaries were most wanted. He himself preached for some days in the vicinity of the town, where he did some good, and then embarked again with Illuminus to join the army of the crusaders, who were besieging Damietta. We shall now speak of the crusade, and of this siege.

At the council of Lateran,(98) which was held in 1215, Pope Innocent III. represented so energetically the miserable state to which the Christians in the Holy Land were reduced, under the domination of the Saracens, that in order to deliver them from so cruel a slavery, the council ordered the assembly of a similar crusade to that which had been ordered two centuries before, for the same object. The bishops proclaimed it everywhere with great ardour, and the Pope, to give it greater weight, went himself into Tuscany to preach it after having published it at Rome. This great Pope, dying on the 16th of July, 1216(99), Honorius III., who succeeded him, imitated his zeal, and wrote to the princes and prelates of all Europe, and sent legates every

(97) A town of Phœnicia in Syria, on the confines of Palestine, called by the Hebrews Acon, and Ptolemaide by Ptolemy, king of Egypt. It is called S. John d'Acre, because of the long stay there of the knights of S. John of Jerusalem.

(98) Conc. Lat. 4, Serm. 1, Inn. Pop.

(99) Ep. Honor. III. lib. 1, epist. 1, et seq.

where, to urge the execution of what had been decreed in the council of Lateran. The success was as prompt as it was fortunate, so that at the time fixed, that is on the 1st of June, 1217, an infinity of crusaders, principally from the North of Europe, were in readiness to set out for Palestine, by land and by sea. (100)

After some expeditions, the crusaders thought that, instead of operations in Palestine, which they had hitherto confined themselves to, it would be advisable to carry the war into Egypt, because it was thence that the Sultans sent large armies into the Holy Land againt the Christians; and this had been the opinion of Pope Innocent at the Lateran Council.(101) It was therefore decided to lay siege to Damietta, the strongest town in Egypt, and from its situation the key of that kingdom. The first of those who sailed, arrived before the place on the 30th of May; they disembarked, and entrenched themselves without meeting with any resistance, and when the remainder of the army arrived, the attack commenced.

The siege lasted nearly eighteen months, with ultimate success, and some astonishing acts of bravery were witnessed. Coradin, (or Moaddam) the Sultan of Damascus, came with an army much more numerous than that of the Crusaders, and besieged them in their entrenchments; and Meledin, (or Melic Camel) his brother, Sultan of

(100) Raynald, ad ann. 1216, n. 28.
(101) Jac. Vitr. Hist. Orient. lib. 3, ad ann. 1218.

Egypt or of Babylon, (102) having brought an equally numerous army, they drew up their troops in order of battle, on the last day of July, 1219, in the early morning, and appeared before the Crusaders' lines, which they attacked on several points. The battle was obstinately contested; it lasted till night, and the Saracens seemed to have the victory, but it was torn from them, chiefly by the indomitable bravery of the French, supported by the Grand Master of the Temple, and the Teutonic knights, who drove the infidels far from their lines with great slaughter. Dissensions then arose between the cavalry and infantry of the Crusaders. (103) They accused each other of cowardice, a reproach very grating to military men; the consequence was, that a turbulent rivalry ensued, in order to prove which had the greatest courage, and they compelled John de Brienne, King of Jerusalem, who commanded the army, to lead them to the enemy and offer him battle.

It was at this moment that Francis arrived at the camp, having no other arms than those of faith. (104) He said to his companion, with deep

(102) He was called Sultan of Babylon, from his capital city called Babylon of Egypt, or the new Babylon, to distinguish it from the Babylon of Asia on the Euphrates, built by Nimrod, the capital of Chaldea. It was opposite Memphis, near the Nile, and on its ruins Grand Cairo is built.

(103) Jac. Vitry. ibid. ad ann. 1219.

(104) The author of the History of the Crusades, 2 tom. lib. 9, speaks thus: "It was then that S. Francis, contrary to his custom, interfered in matters which were not wholly religious, and did all in his power to oppose this resolution (to give battle). As the Spirit of God agrees with common sense, he foretold, with great reason, that so ill-concerted an undertaking would be fatal." Are

sighs:—"The Lord has revealed to me, that if they come to blows, the Christians will be worsted. If I tell them this, I shall be considered as an idiot; and if I do not tell it, my conscience will reproach me; what do you think of it?" His companion, whose name was Illuminatus, and who indeed was filled with light, replied:—"My brother, do not let the opinions of men guide you; it is not the first time that you have been looked upon as one bereaved of sense. Clear your conscience, and fear God more than the world." Francis immediately went and warned the Christians not to fight, and foretold them that if they did, they would be beaten.

Minds were however too much excited to listen to sane reason; the words of the saint were taken for ravings. On the 29th of August, when the heat was overpowering, the whole of the Christian army left their lines and offered battle. The enemy at first retired, in order to draw the Crusaders to an extensive plain, where there was no water, and when he saw that thirst and fatigue had caused their ranks to be broken, he turned suddenly and fell upon the cavalry of the right wing, which he took in flank; it was soon broken and dispersed; its route caused the infantry,

we to be told that a saint interferes in matters which are not wholly religious, when he foretells, by inspiration from God, the loss of a battle? Was anything of this kind said of the prophets, who predicted fatal events? Moreover, why is the prediction of S. Francis to be attributed partly to the knowledge he had of the ill concerted measures? He spoke on the very day he arrived in the camp, he knew nothing of the country, nor of war, nor of the measures about to be taken. Was it not intented to diminish what was supernatural and marvellous in the prediction?

which was supported by it, to fly, and the whole army would have been cut to pieces had not the king, followed by the knights of the three orders of French, Flemish and English, and other troops, posted themselves in front and stopped the Saracens who were pursuing the fugitives, and effected a beautiful retreat. The Christians lost on this occasion, near six thousand men, besides prisoners, among whom were many of considerable note. This loss (105) was the accomplishment of what Francis had foretold; (106) and it showed, adds St. Bonaventure, "that his valuable advice ought not to have been disregarded, since, according to the words of the Holy Scriptures, 'the soul of a holy man discovereth sometimes true things, more than seven watchmen that sit on a high place to watch.'" (107)

The faults of the Crusaders, and the ill-successes which often attended their measures, have given room to minds disposed to censure, to condemn all wars undertaken against infidels, or heretics. Nevertheless, the Crusades, during two centuries, were suggested by the Sovereign Pontiffs, and by the councils of the church, proclaimed by most holy personages, and authorised by their miracles; led by Christian princes of all

(105) It did not put a stop to the siege. The town of Damietta was taken by the Crusaders, on the 5th of November of the same year.

(106) This prophecy is related by the three companions of S. Francis, by S. Bonaventure, by Marin Sanut, and by many other writers, both ancient and modern. Raynald ad ann. 1219. Wading, ad ann. 1219, n. 87.

(107) Eccl. xxxvii. 18.

Europe, by many of our kings, by a Saint Louis, by men full of religious zeal, such as Godfrey of Bouillon, and Simon, Count of Montford. Is there not somewhat of rashness in including such men as these in one sweeping condemnation? If all the Crusaders had not equally pure intentions, if debauchery insinuated itself into their armies, if prudence did not always regulate their proceedings; if sometimes even success did not crown their best concerted measures, are these sufficient grounds for blaming the enterprise? or, are we only to judge of measures by the event?

Saint Bernard preached the crusade which was decided on in the year 1144, of which Louis VII. King of France, had first formed the plan, and of which Pope Eugenius III., and the bishops of France approved. The preaching of the holy abbot was publicly supported by a prodigious number of miracles, (108) which even his humility could not dissemble. Two powerful armies, the one commanded by the Emperor Conrad III., the other by the King of France, with the princes and nobility of the states, were calculated to inspire the Infidels with terror. Nevertheless, from

(108) The author of the History of the Crusades leaves to every one the choice of believing as he thinks proper, of the miracles performed by S. Bernard while preaching the Crusade. He gives two reasons, which he affects to draw from two passages, the one from the Life of the Saint, written by his secretary, Geoffry, book 3, chap. 4. the other from the second book, De la Consideration, chap. 1. But we have only to read the second passages to be convinced that these miracles were numerous and very public. See the notes of Father Mabillon, in cap. 1, lib. 2, De Consideratione, and in Epist. 142, S. Bernard ad Tolosanos. Histoire des Croisades, in 4, tom. 1, liv. 3, page 209, and liv. 4, page 280.

various causes, nothing could have been more unfortunate than the issue of this war; and as the loss of these two armies was felt through the whole of France, and through the whole of Germany, where St. Bernard had preached, and promised glorious success, public indignation fell upon him, and he was treated as a false prophet. What he wrote to Pope Eugenius in his justification, must be considered as an answer to all those, who even in these days, condemn the Crusades, the result of which was disastrous. (109) He says, "that Moses in God's name had solemnly promised the people of Israel, to lead them into a very fertile land, and that God had even confirmed that promise by splendid miracles; that nevertheless, all those who went out of Egypt perished in the desert, without entering into the land of promise, in punishment of the sins of the people during the journey; that it cannot be said that this punishment was a contradiction of the promise, because the promises which God in His goodness makes to man, never prejudice the rights of His justice;" and this reasoning the saint applies to the crimes committed in the armies of the Crusades.

The Crusades, they say, were the devotion of those times, and had become fashionable. Yes, the devotion of those times, the devotion of the Popes, of the kings, of the princes, and of all the faithful of those days was to drive the Infidels from the Holy Land, of which they had unjustly

(109) S. Bernard de Considerat. lib. 2, cap. 1.

become the possessors; to re-establish the holy places, consecrated by the actions and sufferings of the Son of God; to prevent the Mahomedans from extending their dominion, so that the Christians should not groan under their tyranny; and sometimes to reduce, by force of arms, certain heretics who were in open rebellion, such as the Albigenses, when there were no other means of arresting the progress of their sect. Let it now be shown what is the devotion of our times, and in what it is preferable to that of our forefathers which they condemn. Truly, it is only requisite to have some share of good sense, to be prepared to admit, that there was true piety in the minds and in the conduct of those who lived in those days, as well as in the age and in the country in which we live.

This digression may perhaps appear long but we could not dispense with it for the honour of the religious and of the preceding ages; and besides which, it is connected with the life of St. Francis, who certainly approved of the Crusades, although by a supernatural inspiration he blamed a particular enterprise of the Crusaders which had the unfortunate issue which he had foretold.

The ardour of his charity which urged him to labour for the conversion of the Saracens, and to expose himself to martyrdom, induced him to take the resolution to present himself to the Sultan of Egypt. "We saw," says James de Vitry, "brother Francis, the founder of the Order of the Friars Minor, a simple and unlearned man,

though very amiable, and beloved by God and man, who was respected universally. He came to the Christian army, which was lying before Damietta, and an excess of fervour had such an effect upon him, that protected solely by the shield of faith, he had the daring to go to the Sultan's camp to preach to him and to his subjects the faith of Jesus Christ." (110)

The two armies were in sight of each other, and there was great danger in going from one to the other, particularly as the Sultan had promised a handsome reward in gold to any one who should bring him a Christian's head. But this would not deter such a soldier of Jesus Christ as was Francis, who, far from fearing death, eagerly sought it. He betook himself to prayer, from which he arose full of strength and confidence, saying with the prophet: "Since Thou art with me, O Lord, I will fear no evil, though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death;" (111) and he set out for the infidel camp.

Two sheep which he met on setting out, gave him much joy. He said to his companion: "My brother, have confidence in the Lord, the word of the Gospel is being fulfilled in us, which says:

(110) There is a detailed account of what passed there, taken in part from J. de Vitry, bishop of Acre, and subsequently Cardinal and bishop of Frascati, who was present at the siege of Damietta, and who saw S. Francis there; partly from S. Bonaventure, on the testimony of the three companions of the holy patriarch, and of M. Sanut, a writer well informed on the affairs of the Levant. J. Vitr. Hist. Occid. cap. 37, et Epist. ad Lotharing. ad calc. Hist. Orient. lib. 3. S. Bonav. Legend S. Francis, cap. 9 and 11. Mar. Sanut, secret. fidel. cruc. lib. 3, part 11, cap. 7 and 8, tom. 2. Gesta Dei p. Franc.

(111) Psalm xxii. 4.

Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." (112) In fact, only a very little farther on, some Saracens rushed upon them, as wolves upon sheep, insulted and beat them, and bound them. Francis said: "I am a Christian, lead me to your master;" and God permitted that he should be so led to comply with the desire of His servant.

The Sultan Meledin asked him who sent them, and for what purpose they came? Francis answered with courageous firmness: "We are not sent by men, but it is the Most High, who sends me, in order that I may teach you and your people the way of salvation, by pointing out to you the truths of the Gospel." He immediately preached to him, with great fervour, the dogma of One God in Three Persons, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind.

Then was seen verified what our Saviour said to His Apostles: "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist or gainsay." (113) Meledin became so mild and tractable, that admiring the courage of Francis, he listened quietly to him for some days, and invited him to stay with him. The man of God said: "If you and your people will be converted, I will remain for the love of Jesus Christ. And if you hesitate between His law and that of Mahomet, let a great fire be lit up, and I will go into it with your priests, in order that you may see thereby which is the

(112) Math. x. 16. (113) Luke xxi. 18.

faith to follow. "I do not believe," replied the Sultan, "that any of our priests would go into the fire, or suffer any torments for his religion." (114) He answered thus because he perceived that as soon as the fire was proposed, one of the eldest of the priests, one who was of the most considerable of them, got quickly away. "If you will promise me," added Francis, "that yourself and your people will embrace the Christian faith, in case I came forth from the fire, safe and sound, I will enter it alone; if I am burnt let it be imputed to my sins; but if God preserve me, you will then acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the true God and Saviour of mankind."

Meledin acknowledged that he dared not accept this challenge, lest it should be the cause of a sedition; but he offered him rich presents, which the servant of God despised from his heart, as so much dirt. Such entire disengagement from the good things of this world, inspired the Prince with such veneration and confidence that he entreated the saint to receive his presents, and to distribute them among the poor Christians or to the Churches for the salvation of his soul. Francis, who had a loathing of money, and who did not find in the Sultan any groundwork of religion, persisted in his refusal of these offers. He moreover thought it was time to leave the infidels

(114) S. Francis called those priests whom the Mahomedans call Imaums, who are the ministers of their religion, who have the care of their mosques, and perform the public prayers there under the authority of the chief Imaum. We have retained the term priest, because it is in the Legend of S. Bonaventure. See the Biblioth. Orientale of D'Herbelot, under the word Imaums.

when he saw no prospect of effecting any good, and where he had no further chance of gaining the crown of martyrdom; and he learnt by a revelation that what he intended was conformable to the will of God. The Sultan on his part fearing that some of his people might be moved by the discourse of Francis, and being converted might join the Christian army, caused him to be escorted with marks of consideration to the Christian camp before Damietta, after having said to him in private: "Pray for me, that God may make known to me what religion is most agreeable to Him, in order that I may embrace it."

Was it not a sight worthy of God, of angels, and of men, to see on one side Francis, clothed in sackcloth, pale, emaciated, disfigured by his penitential austerities, pass through an army of infidels, and present himself boldly before their Sovereign, speak to him against the law of their prophet, and exhort him to acknowledge the divinity of Jesus Christ; and on the other side the Sultan of Egypt, the mortal enemy of the Christians, elated by the victory he had just gained over them, and anxious to shed more of their blood, suddenly lose all his ferocity, become mild and tractable, listen attentively to the poor one of Jesus Christ, endeavour to retain him, offer him large presents, admire his poverty, his disinterestedness, his courage, ask the aid of his prayers, that he might know and embrace the true religion, and send him back to the Christian camp with honour? How certain it is, that the religion of Jesus Christ will never be made more

respectable and amiable to the infidels, than by the practice of the exalted virtues which it teaches, and by which it became established in the world.

Another scene which is not less striking in the eyes of piety, is the heart of Francis, burning with anxiety to shed his blood for the glory of his Master, and not being able to satisfy that ardour. Already, in the hope of attaining it, he had embarked for Syria, and contrary winds had driven him back to the Christian shores. He had gone into Spain in order to pass into Africa, when a violent illness compelled him to desist from the undertaking. He thinks he already grasps the palm, when he finds himself in Egypt; in order to hasten the accomplishment of his desires he places himself in the hands of the infidels, and attacks the tyrant on his throne; when, instead of the opprobrium and tortures which he sought, he finds nothing but mildness and curiosity, attentions and honour. He seeks far for martyrdom, and martyrdom flies from him. "It was," St. Bonaventure remarks, "by an admirable disposition of Divine Providence, who chose that the ardent desire of his faithful servant should give him the merit of martyrdom, and that his life should be preserved to receive the glorious stigmata which were to be impressed on his body by a singular prerogative, in reward of his great love for Jesus crucified, who inflamed his heart."

Wading relates, (115) upon the authority of a

(115) In the work entitled, Scriptores Ordinis Minorum, at the word Hugolinus de Sancta Maria in monte, it is said: I have in my

religious of the order, who was a contemporary of St. Francis, whose name was Ugolino of St. Mary of the Mount, corroborated by some other writers of the order, that the sultan was converted and baptized. Some later authors deny this, (116) and remark that they have mistaken the Sultan of Egypt for the Sultan of Iconium, who never saw St. Francis, and of whom James of Vitry says, (117) that he was believed to have received baptism at his death, which happened in the year when Damietta was besieged. It is admitted that Wading was mistaken (118) in quoting this passage to prove the conversion of the Sultan of Egypt, but that does not weaken the evidence of Ugolino. He says that Francis went a second time to the sultan before his return to Italy ; that he urged him to be converted, and that not being able to induce him to overcome the human obstacles which stood in the way, he prayed fervently for him for several successive days, and that his prayers were heard ; which he communicated to Méledin, who imbibed great affection for him, and wished to detain him, but he

hands the manuscript beautifully written, of the history in which Ugolino relates the Life and actions of S. Francis and his companions.

(116) Spond. ad ann. 1219, n. 3. Histoire des Croisades tom. 2, liv. 9, p. 263.

(117) J. Vitr. Hist. Orient. lib. 3, ad ann. 1219, page 1142.

(118) J. de Vitry says: Mortuus est Soldanus Ichonii, qui creditur baptizatus fuisse. Wading has apparently thought that the Sultan of Egypt had died at Iconium, although this town, which is in Asia Minor, is very far from it, and he did not know that there was a Sultan of Iconium. Moreover, he did not reflect that Meledin, having lived many years afterwards, could not be the person whose death De Vitry recorded in 1219, at the siege of Damietta.

departed according to the command that he had received from heaven : that some years after, this prince being dangerously ill, the saint appeared to two of his religious who were in Syria and ordered them to go to him, instruct him, baptize him, and remain with him till he should expire ; all which was complied with. There is nothing in all this which is not very probable, and which is not consistent with circumstances that cannot be called in question.

1. We have seen, in the narratives of James of Vitry, and of St. Bonaventure, that Méledin said to Francis, " Pray for me, that God may make known to me which religion is most agreeable to Him ;" and that he wished to induce him to receive his presents, in order to distribute them to the poor Christians, or to the churches, for the salvation of his soul.

2. After he had seen the holy man, he treated the Christians with great humanity, (119) and shortly after their discomfiture, he sent some of his prisoners to their camp, to offer terms of peace. In the year 1221, their army, (120) which was coming to offer him battle, entangled itself between two branches of the Nile, where it must have inevitably perished. " He behaved to his enemies," says one of our authors, (121) " in such a manner as could not reasonably have been expected from a Saracen, and which in

(119) Sanut supr. capa. 9.
(120) Spond. ad ann. 1221 n. 17.
(121) Hist. des Crois. as above, liv. 10, page 291.

these days would do honour to a Christian prince were he to do it."

3. An author, whose testimony on such a point is beyond suspicion, (122) says, "that this sultan being on his death-bed, caused a large sum of money to be distributed among the poor Christians who were sick in the hospitals, and that he left a considerable revenue for the same purpose; that he enfranchised many slaves, and that he had operated various other acts of mercy, and that his death was greatly lamented by the Christians, whom he spared to the utmost of his power; that the Emperor Frederic was long inconsolable, having had strong hopes that he would have received baptism according to a promise (123) he had given him to that effect, and that he would strenuously contribute to the propagation of Christianity in the Levant."

4. It may have happened that St. Francis, who was then in heaven, appeared to two of the religious of his order, and that he sent them to Méledin; that these religious instructed and baptized him; and that the thing was done secretly from the circumstances of the times; that the authors of those times were not informed of it, and that Ugolino learned it from the religious themselves. In short, it is not improbable, that the conversion of this soul should have been granted to the zeal, labours, prayers and tears of such a friend of God, as St. Francis. Thus, the baptism of the sultan is not so very uncertain,

(122) Math. Paris p. 318, Edit. Paris, 1644.

(123) It was no doubt in 1229, when this Emperor, who was Frederic II., entered into a treaty with him. Rayn. 1229.

and those who have recorded it (124) have not given the saint praise which may be called false, as Wading has been acrimoniously taxed with. After all, if Médelin was not converted, it is a judgment of God, which those must be fearful of who recommend themselves to the prayers of the pious, forming projects of conversion, and even doing some good works, and yet positively resist the grace vouchsafed them, which requires an effectual change of heart. If he was converted, which is probable, it was a great effect of divine mercy, which sinners must not abuse by deferring their repentance; these graces are very rarely given, and those who wait for them run great risk of their salvation.

There is good reason for thinking that he gave Francis and his companions leave to preach in his dominions, since it is well known that the Friars Minor began from that time to spread themselves amongst the Saracens, as James de Vitry thus :—"Even the Saracens, blinded as they are, (125) admire the humility and perfection of the Friars Minor, receive them well, and provide them cheerfully with all the necessaries of life, when they go boldly amongst them to preach the gospel; they listen to them willingly, speaking of Jesus Christ and His doctrine; but they beat them and drive them away if they attack Mahomet, and hold him as a liar and infidel.

An anecdote, related by St. Bonaventure, may have easily happened in those times. A Saracen

(124) Hist. des Crois., as above, liv. 9, p. 263 and 264.
(125) Hist. Occid. cap. 32.

seeing some Friars Minor, was moved by their poverty and offered them some money, which they refused to accept, and this astonished him. Having understood that it was for the love of God that they refused money, he conceived such a liking for them, that he undertook to provide them with everything necessary for them as long as he was able. The holy doctor exclaims on this :— "O inestimable excellence of poverty, which is so powerful to inspire a barbarian with such tender and generous compassion!" It would be a shameful and very criminal thing, were Christians to despise and trample under foot this precious evangelical pearl, for which a Mahometan showed such esteem and respect.

While Francis remained in Egypt, he did not gather much fruit from among the infidels ; but his words were a fertile seed which his disciples reaped the abundant harvest of, when afterwards sent thither by Gregory IX., and Innocent III.

Ugolino, of St. Mary, who has been before quoted, and some others, say that he himself had the first fruits, after a signal victory which he gained over the devil, who tempted him to sin, through a female of considerable beauty. The saint, they say, having then received the gift of counsel, replied, that he would consent, provided he might choose the place. It was a room in which he spread burning coals, on which he laid himself down, after having taken off his miserable tunic ; he then said to the Egyptian :— "This is the place which suits me, I choose this fire in order to escape from other fires ; if those

inflame you, then no water so well adapted to quench them as this." God, by a miracle, prevented his being burnt, and the wanton female, touched by grace, fell on her knees and asked pardon, and then retired penetrated with contrition. Francis instructed her in the truths of religion; she became a Christian and chaste, and was so fervent, that like another Samaritan she brought over many others. This is one of the extraordinary actions sometimes found in the lives of the saints, in which the sanctity of those who are the actors in them, and the good which results from them, manifest that they are the fruits of a divine inspiration.

The Saracens were not the only objects of the zeal of Francis. He laboured also for the salvation of the Christians in the army of the Crusaders, and some of them became his disciples. James de Vitry, Bishop of Acre, (126) writing to his friends in Lorrain, informed them that Renier, the Prior of St. Michael, (127) had joined the Order of the Friars Minor; and that three of the most eminent of his clergy had followed his example, and that it was with difficulty he prevented the chorister and several others from taking the same course, to which he adds that this religious Order spreads fast in the world because it is an exact imitation of the form of the primitive Church, (128) and of the life of the Apostles.

(126) J. Vitr. Epist. ad Lotharing, ad col. Hist. Orient. lib. 3.

(127) It is perhaps a town in Lorain, vulgarly called S. Mitrul.

(128) He makes a more ample eulogium in another place, which will be noticed hereafter.

The most ancient records of the Order assure us that after some months' residence in Egypt, the holy patriarch went to Palestine, and visited the holy places, but they enter into no particulars. What we may safely conjecture is, that God, who led him into the Holy Land, seemed to say to him, as He had said to Abraham: "Arise, and walk through the land in the length and in the breadth thereof, for I will give it to thee;" (129) and repeat what He said of Caleb: "I will bring him into this land which he hath gone round, and his seed shall possess it."

Rather more than a hundred years after his death, the Sultan of Egypt permitted the Friars Minor to take charge of the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord, and they still have the care of it in the midst of the infidels, under the protection of the eldest son of the Church. (130) This privilege, which is so honourable for the Order of St. Francis, and justly considered by them as the fruit of the fervent devotion of the blessed patriarch to Jesus Christ crucified, will be more particularly spoken of when we come to notice the history of the stigmata.

From Palestine Francis went to Antioch, the capital of Syria, and passed by the black mountain, where there was a celebrated monastery of the order of St. Benedict. The abbot who had died only a short time before, had foretold that there would soon come to their house a

(129) Genesis xiii. 17. Numb xiv. 24.

(130) Spond. ad ann. 1236, n. 11, Wading, ad ann. 1233, n. 19, et ad ann. 1342, n. 20.

saintly man, who was much beloved by God, the patriarch of a great order, who would be poorly attired and of mean appearance, but very much to be revered ; in consequence of which the religious, hearing of his coming, went in procession to meet him, and received him with all the honours due to a man of God. He remained some days with them, and the holiness which they observed in him made such an impression upon them, that they embraced his institute, (131) placing all their effects at the disposition of the patriarch of Antioch. Some other monasteries followed their example ; and in a few years there was a flourishing province in that country, which continued until such time as the Saracens ravaged the whole of Syria.

While Francis was thus employed in extending his Order in the East, Brother Elias, who was his vicar-general in the West, was destroying it there. He said to the religious in their conferences, that the life of their founder was worthy of the highest praise, but that it was not given to all to imitate it ; that among the things which he had prescribed for them, some appeared in the eyes of prudence very difficult of observance, others absolutely impracticable and beyond the strength of man ; that in the opinion of the most prudent, some modification was requisite and some change required, some practices tolerated, which were not so strictly regular, from regard to human

(131) Wading replies to the difficulties which seem to throw doubts on this event, ad ann. 1219, n. 66, et seq.

weakness in a time of infirmity and of decay. By specious insinuations of this nature, he brought over many to his opinions, and even some of the provincials who ventured to represent the simplicity of their Father as imprudent. The vicar-general nevertheless, in conjunction with the ministers, made some regulations for the government of the provinces which were very useful; but by a strange inconsistency, at the time when they were talking of modifications, they prescribed total abstinence from meat, and forbad its use either in or out of the cloisters, which was a direct contradiction of the rule, which permits the Friars Minor, except in times of fasting, to eat, according to the terms of the Gospel, (132) whatsoever is put before them.

All those who had the true spirit of God were greatly grieved to see that human prudence was preferred to the divine will, and that the vineyard of the Lord was rendered desolate by Brother Elias. They put up fervent prayers to God for the speedy return of their pastor, so necessary for the flock; and after having secretly concerted together, they sent Brother Stephen into Syria, to communicate to their founder what was going on. Stephen went and gave him a full detail of all things. Francis was not cast down by this deplorable intelligence, but he had recourse to God, and recommended to His protection the family he had received from Him. As to the regulation which prescribed entire abstinence from

(132) Luke x. 8.

meat, he, with great humility, asked the advice of Peter of Catana, who replied: "It is not for me to judge; it is for the legislator to decide thereon, as on all the rest." Francis deferred the decision till his return, and embarked immediately for Italy.

His voyage was not a long one; they soon anchored at the Isle of Candia, from whence they came to Venice where they landed. He sent circular letters to convene the chapter which he proposed holding at the ensuing Michaelmas, to remedy the evil which had been brought about by Brother Elias. He built a small chapel near the Venetian Lakes, (Lagunes,) (133) in which two of his religious were to say the Divine Office, in memory of an extraordinary thing which happened to him at this place, which will be related with other similar ones. This first establishment was enlarged some years after, and was followed by the building of a convent in Venice itself, which the magnificence of a patriarch of the house of Grimani has rendered very considerable.

The saint then went to Padua, Bergamo, Brescia, the island of the lake of Guarda, to Cremona and Mantua; at all these places there were convents of his order. We are assured, that St. Dominic joined him on his way; that they conferred together, and with John of Navarra de Torniella, Bishop of Bergamo, on the salvation of

(133) This is the name given to the sinuosities of the Adriatic Sea around Venice as far as the Lido.

souls; that they made some pious visits to the solitaries of the valley of Astino, and that the patriarch of the Friars Preachers celebrated mass there; that of the Minors being the deacon at the service. When they were in spiritual conference at Cremona, the religious came to request them to bless the well, and to solicit the Almighty to purify the water, which was thick and muddy. Dominic, at the entreaty of Francis, blessed a vessel full of the water, and caused it to be thrown back into the well, and all which was subsequently drawn from it was clear and wholesome to drink.

The two saints separated, but shortly after met again at Bologna. Francis, going to Bologna, met a woman whose son was epileptic, and who came to beg the aid of his prayers. He wrote on a slip of paper some short but very devout ejaculatory prayers, which he desired might be taken to the sick youth; they had no sooner been given to him, than he was entirely cured; in gratitude whereof, he placed himself at the service of the Friars Minor in the convent of Parma.

The reputation of the holy man was so great, that, according to Sigonius, (134) the streets were choked with the number of students, who wished to see and hear him. It was with difficulty that way was made for him to reach the principal square, where he preached in so sublime a manner, that they thought they heard an angel and not a man. The greater part of the audience

(134) Sigonius de Episc. Bonon. lib. 2, ad ann. 1220.

was converted; and many solicited the habit of the Order, among whom were Nicolas of Pepulis, Bonizio, Pelerino, Falleroni, and Riger or Ricer of Modena. Nicholas was that learned Jurisconsult who had been so kind to Bernard de Quintevalle in 1211, when every one had treated him with contempt at Bologna. Bonizio excelled in the love of holy poverty, and was very useful to the Saint in affairs of importance, by the talent he had of managing with prudence. Pelerino and Riger were young gentlemen from the Marches of Ancona, who were students at Bologna, and to whom Francis foretold all they would do in the course of their lives. The first would only be a lay-brother, although he was well versed in canon law; it was said of him that when he was in company with men of the world, either from necessity or from charitable motives, he left them as soon as he could; and when he was censured for so doing as being guilty of rudeness, he replied: "When we have sought Jesus Christ our Master, (135) we have never found Him either amongst relatives or amongst our acquaintances." The second attached himself to his holy patriarch, and strove to imitate him in all things. Although he was eminently favoured with the gift of chastity, he nevertheless avoided with great care the conversation of females, and he said to those with whom he was intimate, who were surprised at it: "I should perhaps lose the gift with which

(135) Luke ii. 44.

I have been favoured by a just judgment of God, if I took fewer precautions: he who loves danger will perish in it." (136)

Here is an authentic testimonial as to one of the sermons which Francis preached at Bologna in the year 1220; it is taken from the Archives of the church of Spalatro, (137) and it is found in the history of the bishops of Bologna, written by Sigonius:

"I, Thomas, citizen of Spalatro, and Archdeacon of the cathedral of the same town, saw, in the year 1220, on the day of the Assumption of the Mother of God, St. Francis preach in the Square in front of the little palace where almost the whole city was collected. He began his sermon thus: 'The angels, the men, and the demons.' He spoke of these intelligent beings so well and with such precision, that many learned men who heard him, were astonished to hear such a discourse from the mouth of so simple a man. He did not diverge to draw a moral from different subjects, as preachers usually do, but as those who dilate upon one point, he brought everything to bear upon the sole object of restoring peace, concord, and union, which had been totally destroyed by cruel dissensions. He was very poorly clad, his countenance was pale and wan, and his whole appearance was uninviting; but God gave such force and efficiency to his words, that they led to the reconciliation of a great number of gentlemen who

(136) Eccles. iii. 27. (137) Sigon. et supra.

were greatly exasperated against each other, and whose irritation had caused the shedding of no small quantity of blood. The love and veneration for the Saint were so universal, and went so far, that men and women ran to him in crowds, and those esteemed themselves fortunate who could only touch the hem of his garments."

The author who records this testimonial adds, that he performed miracles also in Bologna. A child of quality was taken to him who had what is called a pearl on his eye, which rendered him quite blind of it, and no remedy had been found for it. Francis made the sign of the cross over him from the head to the feet, and he was perfectly cured. Having subsequently entered the institute of his miraculous physician, he saw much better with the eye on which the pearl had been, than with the other. This miracle, which was known throughout the city, increased so much the zeal and respect which the Bolognese had for the servant of God, that they could not tear themselves from him, and they gave him a second house for his institute, situated in a wood about a mile from the town.

After these apostolical functions, he went to see Cardinal Ugolino, who was then legate in Lombardy, by whom he was received with marks of the most sincere affection. He proposed next to visit the convent of his Order which was close to one of the gates of Bologna, but as soon as he saw it, finding it much more spacious and handsome than was requisite for strict poverty, he turned away his eyes from it, and said in-

dignantly: "Is this the dwelling of poor evangelical labourers? Such grand and superb palaces, are they for Friars Minor? I do not acknowledge this house as one of ours, and I do not look upon those who dwell in it as my brethren. I therefore order and enjoin all those who wish to continue to bear the name of Friars Minor, to leave this house forthwith, and to give up to the rich of the world buildings which are only fit for them."

He was so implicitly obeyed, that even the sick, among whom was Brother Leo, one of his first companions, who is the relator of this circumstance, were carried out on the shoulders of their brethren and exposed to the air. There they all remained till the arrival of the legate, who, having been informed of what was going on, had come and appeased the holy man. He represented to him that it was necessary to allow the convents to be more spacious, in order that the infirm might have more air for restoring their health; and that such as were well should have more room for relaxing their minds: "But as to the property," he added, "I can assure you that your brethren have no part in it, as it remains entirely in the founders. Moreover, if you have any further scruples on the subject, I declare to you that I take the whole upon myself in the name of the holy Roman Church."

Francis could not resist the powerful reasoning of the prudent and pious Legate, the protector of his Order. He, therefore, consented that his brethren should remain in the convent; he even

ordered them to return to it, but he would not go into it himself, and he chose to take the repose which nature required in the house of the Friars Preachers, where he passed some days with his friend Saint Dominic.

It would appear that St. Bonaventure had this circumstance in view, when he said: "that if it happened that St. Francis found in the houses which his brethren occupied, any thing which looked like property, or that was too elegant, he wished the houses to be pulled down, or that the religious should quit them, because he maintained that the Order was grounded on evangelical poverty as its principal foundation, so that if this poverty was adhered to in it, it would flourish, but that it would perish if it was set aside."

While the Saint was with the Friars Preachers, one of them, from feelings of compassion, begged him to return to his children, and to pardon the fault they had committed, but he replied: "Indulgence, which gives rise to an easy relapse into sin, is not to be commended. I will not sanction by my presence what has been committed against holy poverty." This charitable religious endeavoured to induce him at least to see them, in order that they might be made aware of their fault, and be corrected. "We will come back here together," he said, "if you do not choose to remain there after having performed this duty of superior." Francis yielded to this prudent advice; he went to his children, and seeing them

grieved and repentant, and ready to receive the penance he might inflict, he pardoned them.

His indulgence did not extend to the provincial, whose name was John de Strachia, one of those who wished to have the rule mitigated in 1219. He censured him severely for having had so beautiful a house built, or at least for having permitted it to be built. He upbraided him in strong terms for having, without consulting him, opened a school for the studies of the Friars Minor, and for having made regulations for its conduct more favourable to science than to piety. He did away with this school, because he chose that his religious should pray rather than study, and that the other provincials might learn to be more humble and more religious in all that had relation to studies.

And here we must advert to what happened at a later period ; the provincial had the rashness to re-establish the school after the departure of the founder, who, having been informed of it, and knowing from interior revelation the obduracy of this man, cursed him publicly, and deposed him at the ensuing chapter. The saint was entreated to withdraw this curse, and to give his blessing to brother John, who was a noble and learned man, but he answered : "I cannot bless him whom the Lord has cursed." A dreadful reply, which was soon after verified. This unfortunate man died, exclaiming, "I am damned and cursed for all eternity." Some frightful circumstances which followed after his death, confirmed his awful prognostic. Such a malediction

which pride and disobedience brought upon this learned man, ought to strike terror into those vain men, who forsake piety for science, and in whom great talents have no other effect than to produce in them great attachment to their own conceits, and proud indocility, which induces at length even a revolt against the Church.

St. Francis was not averse from studies, as will be seen, when two years after he caused theology to be taught. But he chose that they should so study as not to extinguish the spirit of prayer. He approved of science, but of that only, which the Holy Spirit calls religious,(138) which is sanctified by the fear of the Lord, of which St. Augustine says: "that it is the companion of charity, and teaches humility."

Cardinal Ugolino proposed to the servant of God that they should make a retreat of some days together, at Camaldoli,(139) in order to give his body some rest, which was borne down by fatigue, and relax his mind from the various cares which oppressed it. He willingly assented to this, because he liked the life of a recluse. They, therefore, went to this holy solitude, and they remained there nearly a month,(140) solely em-

(138) Eccles. i. 17 and 26; S. August. in Psalm 142, n. 5.

(139) This is the celebrated monastery which gave its name to the Order of Camaldulites, founded in the tenth century by St. Romuald, on the rule of St. Benedict, with peculiar constitutions and the white habit. This place is in Romagna, in the states of Florence, on the further side of the river Arno, near a small town of the same name.

(140) This is what led Father Tornamira, a Sicilian Benedictine, in the last century, to imagine and put in writing, that St. Francis had entered the Order of St. Benedict; that the religious of that order had instructed him and assisted him in the composition of the

ployed in meditation on heavenly things. The Cardinal took a cell at the entry of the desert where it is still to be seen ; and Francis took one near it, which had been inhabited by St. Romuald. It has since taken the name of St. Francis' cell, and is only occupied by the prior, or major of Camaldoli. The writers of the country add, that the festival of St. Francis is celebrated solemnly there, and that it is decreed by the statutes that the anthem which the Friars Minor chant shall be sung on that day : Salve Sancte Pater, &c.

The two pious solitaries went from thence to Mount Alvernia, where they only staid a few days. The Cardinal returned to Bologna, and Francis took the route for Assisi, in order to open the chapter at St. Mary of the Angels, as he had given notice.

On the way St. Bonaventure acquaints us what occurred to him. His infirmities and fatigue having compelled him to mount on an ass, his companion, Leonard of Assisi, who followed him on foot, and was also very much fatigued, gave way to human feelings, and said to himself : "His parents were not the equals of mine ; yet

Rules of the Friars Minor ; that this Rule is in perfect accordance with that of St. Benedict, and many other things destitute of any probability, so that if his book had not been condemned at Rome, as it was by the sacred Congregation in 1682, it would not by its circulation have made much impression. Father Dominic de Gubenatis chronologist of the Order of Friars Minor, has not omitted to point out the incorrectness of the fancies of the Sicilian, in his work entitled Orbis Seraphicus, tom. 1, lib. 4, ch. 8, n. 13 et seq. P. Tornamira in S. Bened. abb. Patriarch, lib. 1.

there he rides, and I am forced to trudge on foot and lead him." As he was thus giving way to these thoughts, Francis, to whom God had made known what was passing in Leonard's mind, dismounted, and said: "No, brother, it is not fitting that I should ride while you walk on foot, because you are better born than I am, and are of greater consideration in the world." Leonard, greatly surprised, and blushing for shame, threw himself at his father's feet, acknowledged his fault, and with tears, solicited his pardon.

As soon as the holy patriarch entered the valley of Spoleto, his children came in crowds from various parts to meet him, and to congratulate him on his return. He was greatly gratified on seeing them, and communicated freely with them, encouraging the weak, consoling those who where in affliction, censuring such as were in fault, and exhorting them all to adhere strictly to the rules. It was there that he received a confirmation of the complaints which had been made to him in the Levant, against the government of Elias, his Vicar General, and he had himself the proof of it.

Elias ventured to present himself to him, in a cleaner habit, and one made of finer cloth than those of the other brethren, the cowl of which was longer and the sleeves wider, and he assumed an air little suitable to his profession. Francis dissembling what was passing in his mind, said to him before the assistants: —"I beg you to lend me that habit." Elias did not dare refuse: he went aside and took it off and brought

it to him. Francis put it on over his own, smoothed it down, plaited it nicely under the girdle, threw the cowl over his head, and then strutting fiercely with his head erect, he paced three or four times round the company, saying in a loud voice:—"God preserve you, good people." Then taking the habit off indignantly, he threw it from him with contempt, and turning to Elias, "That is the way," he said, "that the bastard brethren of our order will strut." After this he resumed his usual demeanour and walked humbly with his old and tattered habit, saying:—"Such is the deportment of the true Friars Minor." Then seating himself amongst them, he addressed them in the mildest manner, and spoke on poverty and humility, of which he so forcibly pointed out the perfection, that it seemed to them that those whom they had previously considered the poorest and most humble, had made but small advance in the practice of those two virtues. In fine, he annulled all the novelties which the vicar-general had introduced into the order during his absence, except the prohibition of eating meat, which he thought it necessary to retain some time longer, lest he might be thought to encourage gluttony.

The means he had taken to curb the foolish vanity of brother Elias, showed both his prudence and his authority, and made such an impression on his disciples, that there was not one of them who ventured to say a word in favour of the vicar-general, although he had his partisans amongst them.

Some time afterwards, the patriarch had an opportunity of taking off the prohibition of eating meat, in consequence of a wonderful event which is worthy of being recorded.

A young man in the dress of a traveller, came in haste to the door of the convent of St. Mary of the Angels, and said to brother Massé, who was the porter:—"I wish to speak to brother Francis, but I know he is meditating in the woods; call brother Elias to me, who is said to be learned and prudent, in order that he may satisfy a doubt which presses upon me." The porter was turned away by brother Elias, and was puzzled what reply to give the stranger, not to scandalize him, and not to say what was untrue. The young man anticipated him, saying, "Brother Elias does not choose to come, I must therefore beg you to go to brother Francis, in order that he may desire him to come to speak to me." Massé went, and did as he was requested, and Francis having his eyes fixed on Heaven, said, without changing his position:—"Go and tell brother Elias that I order him to speak to the young man."

This order vexed Elias, and he came to the door in great irritation, asking what he was wanted for? "Do not be angry," said the young man, "I ask you, if those who profess to follow the gospel may not eat whatever is given to them, as Jesus Christ has observed; and if any one may rightfully direct the contrary?" Elias, seizing hastily the door to shut it:—"I know all that," he said, "and have no answer to give you, but go your ways." The young man replied:—"I can-

not tell what you would answer, but I know very well that you ought to give an answer."

When Elias got calm in his cell, he reflected on what had passed, and on what would be proper to say in answer to the questions which had been put to him; and finding it difficult, and being sorry that he had given the young man so ungracious a reception, in whom he thought he had remarked something extraordinary, he returned to speak to him, but he was gone and could not be found. Francis learned from God that it was an angel, and on his return to the convent, he said to brother Elias:—"You do what is not right; you turn contemptuously away angels who come from God to visit and instruct us; I greatly fear that your pride will render you unworthy of the humble institution of Friars Minor, and that you will die out of that state." It was then that he revoked the statute which forbad eating meat. (141)

(141) The author of the Hist. de la Ville de Paris, printed in 1725 by Desprez and Desessarts, tom. 1, lib. 6, pp. 284 and 285, admits that there is no founder of a religious order who has carried evangelical poverty, humility, penance, contempt of the world, and the general privation of everything worldly, farther than S. Francis has, but he adds: "We are bound, however, to remark that he is the first of the religious in the West, who has allowed the use of meat to those of his order who are in health." He who has called on his readers to make this remark, would have done well to tell us what relation it has to the history of the city of Paris, and why he has inserted it, with many other things relative to the first Convent of the Friars Minor in that city, without which his work, with some greater correctness, would still be too extensive? It will not be objected to him that St. Benedict did not prohibit his religious from eating poultry and other birds when in health, because on this head they are satisfied to abide by the decision of Don Mege, and the celebrated Abbot of La Trappe. But we will tell him that if he wished to make a remark as to the use of meat, which St. Francis allowed

Bernard of Quintavalle returning from Spain, and being on the border of a river which he could not cross, the same angel appeared to him in the same form, and greeted him in the Italian language. Bernard surprised at hearing the language of his country, and taken with the good looks of the young man who addressed him, asked him from whence he came. The angel then told him what had just occurred between him and brother Elias. He took him by the hand, carried him across the river, and disappeared, leaving him so full of consolation, that he had no fatigue during the remainder of his journey. When he arrived in Italy, and had related the circumstance, with the day and hour, he found that it was in fact the same angel.

Before the opening of the chapter, Francis reflecting mournfully on the relaxation which had been introduced into his order by those who ought to have been most zealous in promoting the purity of its observance, had a vision, which was very extraordinary. A great statue appeared before him, and he saw it with his bodily eyes ; it greatly resembled that which Nabuchodonosor had seen in a dream, the interpretation of which had been given him by the prophet Daniel. (142) God chose to employ this mode to acquaint the holy patriarch

to those of his order, he should have added, that the holy founder, wholly devoted to the Gospel teaching, was compelled to let men devoted to an apostolic life live as the apostles did ; and that he was well aware that, having no revenues, and subsisting on charity, they could not keep perpetual abstinence, and that nevertheless they kept it at different times for more than half the year.

(142) Dan. ii. 31 and 37.

with the various revolutions which would take place in his order, and he signified them to him by the statue itself, by the different metals of which it was composed, either thus to modify by these humiliating foreshewings the honour which he derived from being the founder of so wonderful a work as that of the establishment of his order, or to inspire him with the intention of raising up fervent prayers to Heaven, which should draw down graces on his flock at all times; which in fact he did with a profusion of tears; or, in fine, it was a foresight given him of the relaxations which would be introduced, to enable him to advise his religious to be more vigilant, as St. Paul had predicted the errors and irregularities which were to occur in the church, in order to excite the vigilance of the bishops. (143)

In Nabuchodonosor's vision, a stone was separated from the mountain, which striking the feet of the statue shivered it to pieces; the statue was wholly broken, and disappeared. (144) This did not occur in the vision which Francis had; for the great body of religion which it represented, which has had its vicissitudes, as all others, and with more lustre than many, because of its more extensive and greater exposure to the eyes of the public, has nevertheless continued to have existence, to maintain itself, to serve the church at all times, and to furnish it with saints; it has even often renewed itself with features which bring to mind

(143) Acts xx. 19. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1.
(144) Dan. ii. 34 and 35.

its primitive beauty; by which it may be said to be a type of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, which, notwithstanding the decay of ages, does not cease to have vigorous and healthy members, by faith, hope and charity, who are as fervent as those of the earliest periods.

The holy founder having listened to all that was said against the government of brother Elias, and to what he had alleged in his justification, held his chapter on the festival of St. Michael, in the convent of Portiuncula. He substituted brother Gratian, in the room of brother John of Strachia, as provincial of Bologna, of which we have spoken before; and brother Peter of Catania, in place of brother Elias; Peter had been the second of his disciples, and into his hands he committed the whole guidance of his order, not only because he did not think himself able to look to it in person, on account of the multitude of religious now belonging to it, and of his infirmity, but in order to improve himself in the virtue of humility, to which he was so much attached.

He then assembled them all and said: "I am now dead to you all; there is Peter of Catania, who is your superior, whom henceforward we must all obey, you and I:" and prostrating himself at the feet of Peter, he promised to obey him in all things as minister general of the order. This title of minister-general was displeasing to the religious, who did not wish it should be given to any one during the lifetime of their father, and

they agreed that he who took his place should only have the title of vicar general.

Francis being on his knees, with his hands clasped, and his eyes lifted up to heaven, said, with affecting emotion, "My Lord Jesus Christ, I recommend to Thee this family, which is Thine own, and which up to this moment Thou hast confided to me. Thou knowest that my infirmities incapacitate me from having any longer the care of it; I leave it in the hands of the ministers; if it should so happen that on their part, negligence, scandal, or too great severity, should be the cause of any one of the brethren perishing, they will render to Thee, O Lord, an account of it at the day of judgment."

From that time till his death he continued as much as was in his power in the humble state of an inferior, although he did not fail to communicate to the superiors the lights which God gave him for the good government of the order, and on several occasions he could not avoid acting as its founder and general.

St. Dominic, his friend, had similar feelings, as to the employments of office. In this year he held the first chapter of his order at Bologna, and wished to resign the station of superior, of which his humility made him consider himself incapable and unworthy; but his religious would not permit it. These have been the feelings of all the saints, because they knew that for the purpose of salvation, it was safer to obey than to command.

Eight days before the chapter, Pope Honorius issued a Bull addressed to Francis, and to the

superiors of the Friars Minor, (145) by which he forbade them to receive any one to profession, unless after a twelvemonth's probation,(146) and directing that after profession, no one whomsoever, should leave the order; forbidding, also, any persons from receiving such as should quit it. What gave rise to this measure was, that at the commencement of the Order of Friars Minor, and of that of the Preachers, there were some who made their profession without a noviciate, for an unfixed term, according as the superiors thought proper under different circumstances, and this sort of precipitate engagement was found to have its inconveniences.

Peter of Catania, acting as vicar-general, and finding that he could not provide for the multitude of religious who came to the convent of St. Mary of the Angels, as to the chief monastery of the Order, thought, that in order to provide for this, some portion of the property of the novices might be retained; on which he consulted

(145) The original of this Bull, sealed with lead, is preserved at Rome in the Archives of the convent of Ara Cœli, n. 38, and it is this which S. Francis quotes, in the second chapter of his Rule when he says, speaking of those who are professed according to the Ordinance of our Holy Father the Pope, they will not be permitted to leave the Order.

(146) The Pope says in his Bull, which Wading relates in extenso, that there is hardly any religious Order in which a certain time of trial is not allowed before profession is made. Pope Alexander II. at a subsequent period, directed that the professions, made in the Orders of the Friars Preachers, and Minors without having been preceded by a year of novitiate, should be null; and the Council of Trent makes it a law for all Orders of any kind, whether of males or females. Cap. Non solum. de regular. et transeunt ad religion. in Concil. Trid, sess. 25, de Regul. cap. 15. The Ordonnance of Blois conformed thereto, in the 28th Article.

Francis to know whether he thought the suggestion proper, and if he would permit it? Francis said: "My dear brother, God preserve us from this sort of charity, which would render us impious in respect of our rule, in order to acquire consideration in the sight of men." The vicar then asking what he should do for the relief of the guests; "Strip the altar of the Blessed Virgin," replied Francis, "take away all the ornaments which are there; the Lord will send you what is requisite to restore to His Mother what we shall employ in charity. Believe firmly that the Virgin will be pleased to see her altar stripped rather than that there should be any contravention of the Gospel of her Son;" and he took occasion again strenuously to recommend holy poverty.

He also said many things relative to books, to science, and to preaching, which will be recorded in another part of his Life. Brother Cæsar of Spires, who had been professor of Theology before becoming a Friar Minor, and who was a man of great piety, having heard all that the Father had said on the subject of science, and the learned, had a long conversation with him on the state of his soul, and on the observance of the rule, which he concluded thus: "My Father, I have made a firm resolution, with God's grace, to observe the Gospel and the rule according to the instruction of Jesus Christ until my death; and now, I have a favour to ask you, which is, that if it may happen in my life time, that some should swerve from it as you have

foretold, you give me your blessing from this moment, and your leave to separate myself from such transgressors, in order that I may adhere to the rule alone with those who have a like zeal with myself." Rejoicing at this proposition, Francis embraced him and blessed him, saying: "Know, my son, that what you solicit is granted to you by Jesus Christ, and by me;" and placing his hands on his head, he added: "Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech." The holy man, desiring to have it understood thereby, that all the promises he had received from Jesus Christ, would have their accomplishment to the end in those who adhered to the rule to the letter, without comment and with holy joy.

It was at this time that he addressed a letter to the religious of his order, (147) and particularly to the priests, upon the profound veneration which we ought to have for that august mystery of the Eucharist. As it is very long, we have reserved it also for the last book, where we shall point out the misuse which heretics and some modern critics have made of a passage in this letter.

In the course of the year 1220, Francis received

(147) Wading thinks this letter was written by S. Francis, in the year 1226, during his last illness; but he gives no proofs of this in his notes on the letters of the Saint, of which this is the twelfth. Father Anthony Melissan de Macro, in his Supplement des Annales de l' Ordre, printed at Turin, in 1710, is convinced that it was written in 1220, and we have adopted his view for the reasons he gives. Wading ad ann. 1226, n. 10, et in argum. in Epist. 12, S. Francisci Suppl. annal. Ord. Min., pag. 26.

the news of the martyrdom of the five religious whom he had sent to Morocco. We must relate the circumstances, (148) since they belong to the life of the holy patriarch, who gave this mission to these valorous soldiers of Jesus Christ, and that they were the first martyrs of the Order in his lifetime.

Berardus, Peter, Otho, Ajut, Accursus, and Vital their superior, having left Italy for Morocco, after having received their Father's blessing, as has already been noticed, arrived shortly after in the kingdom of Arragon, where Vital was detained some time by a lingering illness, which induced him to think that it was not God's will that he should continue his journey. He therefore let the other five proceed, who soon reached Coimbra, and were favourably received y Urraca, Queen of Portugal, the wife of king Alphonso II. This princess conceived so high an opinion of their virtue, and placed such confidence in them, that she entreated them to pray to God to reveal to them the time at which she should die. They promised so to do, although they considered themselves unworthy of making such a request, but they were so favourably heard, that they foretold to the queen that they were to suffer martyrdom with all the circumstances thereof, that their relics would be brought to Coimbra, and that she would receive them honourably, after which she would be called from

(148) Bollandus has given their Acts on the 16th January. Ad SS. Januar. tom. 2.

this world; predictions which were fully verified. They went from thence to Alanquer, where the princess Sancia, sister to the king of Portugal, approving their plans induced them to put secular clothing over their religious habits, without which precaution, they would not have been able to pass into the territories of Morocco.

Having reached Seville, which was then occupied by the Moors, they remained a week concealed in the house of a Christian, where they threw off their secular clothing. Their zeal induced them to go forth, and they got as far as the principal mosque, which they attempted to enter, in order to preach to the infidels, but they were driven back with loud cries and severely beaten. From thence they went to the gate of the palace, saying that they were ambassadors sent to the king from Jesus Christ, the King of kings. They were introduced, and said many things relative to the Christian religion, to induce the king to be converted and receive baptism; but they afterwards added much against Mahomet and against his law, which irritated him to such a degree that he ordered them to be beheaded; but being mollified by the entreaties of his son, he was satisfied with having them confined at the top of a tower, from whence he had them removed to the ground-floor, because from above they continued to speak of Jesus Christ, and against the prophet, to those who entered the palace. Having caused them to be again brought before him, he engaged to pardon them if they would change their religion: "Prince," they

replied, "would to God that you would have mercy on yourself. Treat us as you think proper. It is in your power to take away our lives, but we are sure that death will lead us to a glorious immortality." The king, seeing their unshakeable firmness, sent them, by the advice of his council to Morocco, with Don Pedro Fernandes de Castro, a gentleman of Castile, and some other Christians.

They found there the infant Don Pedro of Portugal, who had retired to that country in consequence of some misunderstanding which he had had with his brother, King Alphonso, and who now commanded the troops of the king of Morocco. This prince received them with great respect and charity as apostolical men, and had them provided with everything necessary for their subsistence. Knowing what had occurred to them at Seville in consequence of their preaching, and seeing that they were still in a state of great weakness in consequence, he endeavoured to dissuade them from doing the same thing in Morocco; but the generous missionaries, solely intent upon their pious object, ceased not to preach without any fear, wherever they met with any Saracens.

One day, when Berardus was giving instruction to the people, and was declaiming against Mahomet from a wagon, the king passed by, going to visit the tombs of his predecessors, and seeing that he continued his talking notwithstanding his presence, he thought the declaimer must be out of his mind, and instantly directed that all the

five should be driven out of the town, and sent back to the country of the Christians. The Infant Don Juan gave them an escort to convey them to Ceuta, whence they were to embark. On the road they got stealthily away from their escort, and returned to Morocco, where they re-commenced preaching in the great square. The king being informed of this became greatly irritated, and had them imprisoned, in order to starve them to death. They were there twenty days without meat or drink.

During this time the heat became so excessive, and caused so much sickness, that it was thought that the hand of God fell heavily upon them to avenge His servants. The king became alarmed, and by the advice of a Saracen, named Abaturino, who loved the Christians, he liberated the prisoners. They were extremely surprised to find that after twenty days' confinement, without any nourishment whatsoever, they came out in full health and strength.

As soon as they had left the prison, they were anxious to re-commence their preaching, but the other Christians, who were apprehensive of the wrath of the king, opposed themselves to it, and had them taken to the place of embarkation, but they again made their escape, and returned to Morocco. Then the infant Don Pedro was induced to keep them in his palace, and to place guards over them to prevent their appearing in public.

This prince being obliged to set out some short time after, to take the command of the army

which the king sent against some rebels, he took the Friars Minor with him, as well as several other Christians, fearing lest during his absence they should escape from those who had charge of them. As he returned victorious, his army was three days without water, and was reduced to the greatest distress. Brother Bernardus resorted to prayer, and having made a hole in the ground with a pick-axe, he caused a spring to flow from it, which sufficed for the whole army, and enabled them to fill their goat-skins, after which it dried up. So palpable a miracle procured for them from all parts the greatest veneration. Many even went so far as to kiss their feet.

When they returned to Morocco, the Infant continued to take the same precautions as before, to prevent their appearing in public ; nevertheless, they found means to get out secretly one Friday, and to present themselves before the king, as he was passing according to his custom to visit the tombs of his predecessors. Berardus again got upon a wagon, and spoke in his presence with astonishing intrepidity. The king, irritated beyond controul, gave orders to one of the princes of his court to have them put to death. This prince only had them put in prison, because he had witnessed the miracle which we have recorded above.

They were very ill-treated in this confinement, but continued to preach even there when there were either Christians or Saracens to listen to them. All this occurred towards the end of the year 1219.

At the beginning of the year 1220, the Saracen prince who had received the order to put them to death, having sent for them from the prison found them very firm in their faith, and that they spoke with the same boldness against their prophet Mahomet. He was so enraged at this, that forgetful of the miracle he had witnessed on the return of the army, he directed them to be kept separated, and tortured in various ways. They tied their hands and feet, and dragged them along the ground by a cord fastened round their necks, and they were so cruelly scourged that their bowels nearly protruded. Thirty men who were employed on this cruel service, did not leave them till they had poured boiling vinegar and oil into their wounds, and rolled them upon broken pieces of earthenware covered with straw.

Some of those who guarded them, saw a great light which came from Heaven, and which seemed to raise these religious up, with an innumerable number of other persons; they thought that they had left the prison and entered it in great haste, where they found them in fervent prayer.

The king of Morocco, informed of what had been done, desired that they might be brought into his presence. They brought them to him naked, their hands tied, and they were driven in with blows and cuffs. A Saracen prince who met them endeavoured to induce them to embrace the law of Mahomet. Brother Otho rejected the proposition with horror, and spat on the ground, to mark his contempt of such a religion; this brought upon him a severe box on the ear, upon which he turned

the other side, according to the direction of the gospel, and said to the prince :—" May God forgive you, for thou knowest not what thou doest." (149)

When they had reached the palace, the king said to them :—" Are you then those impious persons who despise the true faith, those foolish persons who blaspheme the prophet sent from God ?" " O king," they answered, " we have no contempt for the true faith ; on the contrary, we are ready to suffer and die in its defence ; but we detest your faith, and the wicked man who was its author." The king, imagining that he might perhaps gain them over by the love of pleasure, of riches, or of honours, said to them, in pointing out to them some beautiful women whom he had had brought there on purpose :—" I will give you those women for wives, together with large sums of money, and you shall be highly esteemed in my kingdom, if you will embrace the law of Mahomet ; if not, you shall die by the sword." The confessors of the faith answered without hesitating :—" We want neither your women nor your money : keep those for yourself, and let Jesus Christ be for us. Subject us to what tortures you please, and take away our lives. All suffering is light to us, when we think of the glories of Heaven." Then the king having lost all hopes of overcoming them, took his scimitar, and with his own hand split their skulls in two ; and thus was completed the martyrdom of the five Friars Minor, on the 16th of January, 1220.

(149) Math. v. 39.

Their bodies having been dragged out of the town, and cut to pieces by the infidels, were collected by the Christians; and the Infant Don Pedro took them into Spain, from whence he sent them into Portugal, to King Alphonso, not daring as yet to revisit his own country. This king, accompanied by Queen Urraca, and some of the grandees of the kingdom, came with the clergy to meet them, and had them placed with great pomp in the monastery of Regular Canons of the Holy Cross at Coimbra, where they still are. The celebrated miracles which were achieved there in great numbers, as well as those which were performed in Morocco, and on the way to Europe, are recorded by contemporary authors, who have written their acts. (150) Pope Sixtus IV., recognized them solemnly as martyrs in the year 1461, and gave permission to the religious to say their office.

At the time of their death the Princess Sancia of Portugal, was in the act of prayer; they appeared to her with a bloody scimitar in their hands and told her that by their martyrdom they were on their way to heaven, where they would pray to God continually for her, who would thus reward the good she had done them.

What they had foretold Queen Urraca, as to the time of her death came to pass, and her confessor, a canon regular of Santa Cruz, a most exemplary man, of great piety, was made acquainted with it by a very marvellous vision.

(150) Act. SS. Jan.

A short time after the bodies of these glorious martyrs had been placed in the church of this monastery, he saw in the middle of the night the choir filled with religious, who were singing very melodiously, which surprised him exceedingly, neither knowing what brought them there, nor how they got in. He asked one of them, who replied: "We are all Friars Minor. Him whom you see at the head, is Brother Francis, whom you have longed so much to see; and the five who are more resplendent than the rest, are the martyrs of Morocco, who are honoured in this church. Our Lord has sent us hither in order to pray for Queen Urraca, who is dead, and who had great affection for our order; and he has willed that you should see all this, because you were her confessor." The vision disappeared, and the confessor's door was immediately knocked at to communicate to him that the queen was dead.

The severe vengeance with which God visited the King of Morocco and his subjects (151) was also noticed. The right hand with which this prince had struck the holy martyrs, and the whole of his right side from the head to the feet was paralysed, and became perfectly dry. During three years no rain fell in the whole country, and an infinity of people died by pestilence and famine, which scourges lasted five years, God choosing to proportion the duration of the punishment to the number of the martyrs.

All these marvels which he operated in their

(151) Act. SS. Jan.

favour, and the title of martyrs, which the church gives them, must convince every faithful Christian, enlightened by the wisdom which is from above, that it was by a particular impulse from the Holy Ghost that they exposed themselves to death with so much ardour, against the advice of the other Christians. Human prudence is very rash when it takes upon itself to blame what is approved by God and by His church.

It would be difficult to express the joy which filled the heart of Francis, when he learned that his brethren had suffered martyrdom. He said to those who were with him :—"It is now that I can rest assured that I have had five true Friars Minor ;" and he called down a thousand blessings on the convent of Alanquer, where they had prepared themselves for martyrdom, which had such effect, that there have been always since a great number of religious there, and at least one who has been distinguished for religious perfection.

Brother Vital, who had been the superior of these generous martyrs, was delighted on hearing of their triumph, and greatly regretted not having shared therein. It was not in good-will that he was deficient ; he was only arrested by his illness, of which he died at Saragossa some time afterwards.

One of the authors (152) of the life of St. Dominic, tells us, that this great patriarch, who held his general chapter at the time, was in ecstasies of joy when he heard that five Friars Minor had

(152) Ferd. de Castill. Hist. Prædic. lib. 1, cap. 51, apud Wading, ad ann. 1220, n. 51.

received the crown of martyrdom ; that he looked upon it as the first fruits of the plans of his friend Francis, and at the same time, as a powerful incentive for his brethren to aspire to what is most perfect, which is to suffer for the faith of Jesus Christ. The Friars Preachers have profited by the example, as is evinced by the great number of martyrs of their order, by whom the church has been enriched.

It was not without a special dispensation of Providence, that the relics of the five martyrs were deposited at Coïmbra, in the church of the Canons Regular of Santa Cruz, since our Lord made them subserve to the vocation of St. Anthony of Padua, who is one of the most striking ornaments of this renowned order.

He was a native of Portugal, of a very noble family of Lisbon, born in the year 1195, (153) and had received the (154) name of Ferdinand, in baptism. The first years of his life had been passed in innocence and piety ; the fear of being seduced by the world, and the wish to consecrate himself wholly to God, made him take the resolution, at the age of fifteen, to enter the order of Regular Canons, in the convent of St. Vincent at Lisbon. Two years

(153) Some authors quoted by Bollandus and by Wading, say that the father of S. Anthony of Padua was known by the name of Bouillon, and believe that he took it from the Castle of Bouillon, which Godfrey of that name who was king of Jerusalem has rendered so celebrated. He may originally have been from that country, and as he was of high quality, have come from a branch of the House of Ardenne, to which the county of Bouillon, afterwards a duchy, belonged. The mother of the saint was Tavera, of an illustrious Portuguese family. Act. SS. ut suprà pag. 706. Annot. litt. B. Wading, ad anno 1220, n. 53.

(154) Act. SS. Jan. die. 13, tom. 2.

afterwards, in order to avoid the frequent visits of his friends, which interfered with habits of retirement, he asked permission of his superior to remove to the convent of Santa Cruz, at Coïmbra, which is of the same order. He had some difficulty in obtaining this leave, because they had great esteem for him personally. He made use of the quiet he now enjoyed to apply himself to the study of sacred literature, and, as if he had foreseen what he was to do at a future period of his life, he not only taught himself what was requisite for his own satisfaction, but also what was useful for instructing others in the paths of virtue; he gathered also from the Holy Scriptures, and from the study of the fathers, what could serve to confirm the truths of faith, and to impugn error. The assiduity with which he pursued his studies, together with the excellence of his memory, and his surpassing talents, with the light he received from Heaven, rendered him in a short time very learned.

The relics of the five Friars Minor who had been martyred at Morocco, and which were taken to Santa Cruz, at Coïmbra, at that time, inspired in his heart an anxious desire to die for Jesus Christ as they had done, and made him entertain the thought of becoming a member of that order, as the school of martyrdom. Some old authors, (155) add that St. Francis, (156) who was then at Assisi,

(155) Act. SS. supra, p. 707. Annot. lit. 1, and Wading ad ann. 1220, n. 54.

(156) Mariana is greatly in error when he says in his History of Spain, Book 12, chap. 8, that S. Francis, being in Portugal, S. Anthony of Padua joined him, and embraced his state of life; for it is

appeared to him, and induced him to embrace his institute, foretelling him what would happen to him.

The Friars Minor of the convent of St. Anthony of Olivares, near Coïmbra, having come to the Canons Regular of Santa Cruz to quest, Ferdinand could not controul his zeal, but taking them aside he opened to them the wish he had to enter their community. They were highly pleased on hearing this, and fixed the day with him for putting his design into execution. In the meantime, he asked leave of the superior of Santa Cruz, to effect the change, and with great difficulty obtained it. The Friars Minor returned on the appointed day, and gave him the habit of the order, in the convent of Santa Cruz itself, and took him back with them to that of St. Anthony. The loss of so estimable a member was very distressing to the canons; (157) one of them who felt it more than the others, said to him with bitterness as he left the house :—"Go, perhaps you will become a saint."

certain, that S. Francis went into Spain in 1213, and returned in 1214; that S. Anthony, born at Lisbon in 1195 or 1196, according to Wading, took the habit of regular Canon in 1201, and did not enter the Order of S. Francis, till the year 1220. It is a mistake which ought to be noticed in the French translation of this history, which was printed in 1725, with notes, Tom. 2, liv. 12, n. 66.

(157) Paciecus, an author quoted by Bollandus, says that the Canons regular of Santa Cruz, were greatly displeased that their confrère Ferdinand should have left them to become a Friar Minor, and that their indignation was so great that Pope Gregory IX. was forced to address a brief to the Prior, in which he warned him that unless his religious gave over insulting the Friars Minor he should call upon the Bishop of Visceo to punish them. The Brief is dated in the seventh year of his pontificate, on the 12th of June. This was the year 1227, the next after the death of S. Francis; S. Anthony being then living. This is precisely 500 years ago, and still we are not sure that the wound is completely healed in the Order, as yet. Act. SS. suprà, p. 707, vol. i. Annot. lit. K.

To which Ferdinand answered with humility :— "When you hear that it is so, you will doubtless give praise to God." He was not satisfied with having changed his order ; he chose likewise to change his name, in order by that means to disappoint those who might endeavour to seek for him ; and as St. Anthony was the titular saint of the convent, he begged the superior to call him Anthony, which is the name he was ever after known by, and to which was added, of Padua, because his body reposes in that city, and is there honoured by the faithful.

The wish to shed his blood for the faith of Jesus Christ, which was the source of his vocation, was constantly increasing in his mind and gave him no rest. He solicited leave from the superiors to go into Africa, which was granted to him, as had been promised him when he entered the Order. Being come into the land of the Saracens, he was seized with a violent illness, which confined him the whole winter, and obliged him to return to Spain in the spring for his recovery. He embarked for this purpose, but the Almighty, who had destined him for the martyrdom of the apostolical life, and who intended by his means to convert an infinity of souls in Italy and France, gave him a passage in a contrary direction. The wind drove the vessel he was in to Sicily, where he landed, and from thence, in the following year, we shall meet him in the general chapter at St. Mary of the Angels.

It was in this year, 1220, that the Friars Minor, Angelus and Albert, both natives of

Pisa, after having staid some time at Paris, in order to arrange the first establishment there, crossed the channel to England, whither Francis had sent them at the general chapter of 1219. The religious of St. Dominic had already a convent at Canterbury, where they received the two new comers with great charity. King Henry III., who reigned at that time, settled them with royal magnificence at Oxford, where he held his court, and he conceived so great a liking for them, that he had a lodge built near their convent, to which he occasionally retired, in order to converse with them.

The reason which primarily induced him to show them so much consideration, was his having learnt from authentic sources what had occurred to them on their journey from Canterbury to Oxford. (158) The prior, the sacristan, and the cellarer, of the abbey of Abingdon, who were at one of their farms, contrary to the usual practice of their Order, where hospitality is always given, as recommended by St. Benedict, refused it to these poor religious, and turned them from their doors, although it was at night-fall. (159) A young religious, who was in their company, seeing that they were about to pass the night in the wood, introduced them secretly into the barn, brought them some food, and recommended himself urgently to their prayers. In the night he had a dreadful vision of the justice with which God visited the prior and the two others, but

(158) S. Anton. chron. part 3, lit. 24, cap. 7, s. 2.
(159) Wading ex chron. ant. MS. ad ann. n. 1220, n. 59.

which did not fall on him, because he had been charitable. In the morning he went to them with a view of telling them what he had seen in his sleep, and found them all three dead in their beds. Struck with astonishment he left the farm, from whence the two Friars Minor had departed before day-break, and went to relate what had happened to the abbot of Abingdon; they both had serious reflections on this subject, which ended in their entering into the Order of Friars Minor. So extraordinary an occurrence could not be kept secret, many persons heard it; the king was made acquainted with it, and this caused the favourable reception he gave to Angelus and Albert.

His open protection, with the sanctity of their lives, caused the institute to flourish throughout the kingdom. Several doctors of theology embraced it; and subsequently Robert Maideston, Bishop of Hereford, an enlightened prelate, of great distinction at court, obtained leave from Gregory IX. to give up his bishopric to take the poor habit of St. Francis, under which he became a model of humility. In some convents schools were established, the principal one at Oxford, which produced many learned men.(160)

(160) Wading says, on the authority of some English writers, in the year 1220, n. 62, that Robert Grosetete established the school of the Friars Minor at Oxford, and that being Bishop of Lincoln, he continued to show them much favour, wrote in commendation of the Order, laboured with them in the elucidation of the Scriptures, and left them by his will his library. But if they profited by his learning and his good will, they did not imitate him in his bitter invectives against the Sovereign Pontiffs. We do not understand why the author of the Histoire Ecclesiastique, who censures these dreadful effusions, has nevertheless copied his scandalous expres-

Three hundred years after, King Henry VIII. destroyed all these monuments of science and religion, which his predecessor Henry III. had raised with so much zeal, and tyrannically treated the successors of those, who had been received with so much benevolence. The strange revolution which the incontinence and heresy of this prince brought about in England, reduced the Friars Minor, and all other missionaries, to the necessity of running greater risks in endeavouring to maintain the remnant of faith, than what they have to incur amongst the infidels.

We suppress all comment on so deplorable a subject, and we are satisfied with offering up our prayers to the Almighty (161) that He would

sions, and says that he died in odour of sanctity, that it was even said that he had worked miracles at his death. Tom. 17, liv. 83, n. 45. The Ecclesiastical History has no need of such documents; nor of such saints, nor of such miracles, which were never acknowledged by the Church. Moreover, the author of whom we speak, only quotes in support of what he says, Mathew Paris, who has only beatified the Bishop of Lincoln because of the aversion they both had for the Popes, and who on other occasions gives a terrific account of this very prelate. To form a correct opinion of Robert Grostête, Bishop of Lincoln, it is necessary to read the second letter of the Bishop of N., printed in 1719, p. 107.

(161) God forbid, that under the pretext of facilitating the reunion of the English to the Catholic Church, we should adopt the opinions of an author who some years ago strove to prove, against the opinion of the Church, that they have a succession of Bishops validly consecrated; and who, in order to justify them, published some manifest errors as to the sacrifice of the mass, and the real presence, and the priesthood, and the forms of the Sacraments, and the character imprinted by them, on the rites and ceremonies of the Church, on the authority and Primacy of the Pope, and other important points. The Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, by his mandement of the 18th of August, 1727, condemns the writings of this author, as containing false, erroneous, scandalous doctrines, injurious to the Church and to the Holy See, favouring

deign to cast the eyes of His mercy upon those islands, which formerly gave so many saints to the Church; that by His grace the talent and learning which are found there, may be employed in searching for the truth and appreciating that truth which the illustrious Pope St. Gregory had taught there in the sixth century; that these talents may be no longer employed in the defence of a variety of sects, equally at variance with the doctrines of antiquity, condemned by the principles of the Christian religion, and by the rules of right reasoning; and that it shall no longer be said that men of learning make use of the lights they have received and cultivated, to countenance every description of falsehood; so that, as St. Leo said of idolatrous Rome, (162) dictating to almost all other nations, she herself was the slave of all their errors.

Some of the French bishops entertained scru-

schism and heresy, and even contrary on many points to the Catholic doctrine; and he forbids, on pain prescribed by the laws, his subjects from reading these works. The cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, assembled in extraordinary meeting at Paris, twenty in number, censured them on the 22nd August, 1727, as follows: "Censure of the books of Brother Peter Francis le Courayer, Canon regular of S. Genevieve, entitled, Dissertation on the validity of the English Ordinations, &c., Defence of the Dissertation on the validity of the English Ordinations, &c." They declare all the propositions inserted in the censure respectively false, rash, captious, ill-sounding, scandalous, injurious to the Church and to the Holy See, favouring schism and heresy, erroneous, and already condemned by the Council of Trent, and heretical. At Paris, printed by Widow Mazieres, and J. B. Garnier, printers to the Queen, S. Jacques Street, at the sign of Providence. In consequence of this censure of the bishops, whose opinion had been solicited by the king, his Majesty caused the two works to be suppressed, by decree of the Council of State of the 7th Sept., 1727.

(162) S. Leon in Nat. Apost. serm. 1.

ples relative to the institution of the Friars Minor; they thought their mode of life was not approved of, and thinking unfavourably of those who followed it, they behaved harshly in their regard; Pope Honorius, being made acquainted with this, addressed a Brief to all the prelates of that kingdom, and in particular (163) to the Archbishop of Sens, and to the bishop of Paris:

"Honorius, Bishop, the Servant of the servants of God: To our venerable Brethren the Archbishops and Bishops, and to our dear Sons the Abbots, Priors, and other Ecclesiastical Superiors of the kingdom of France; Health and Apostolical Benediction.

"We remember to have written to you before in favour of our dear sons, the brethren of the Order of Friars Minor, in order that for the love of God, you should have consideration for them. Nevertheless, we have heard that some of you will not suffer them in your diocesses, having scruples as to the approbation of the Order; although they have not found anything in them calculated to create suspicion, as we have been assured by persons fully worthy of credit; and that, moreover, our letters of recommendation ought to have sufficed to have prevented any ill opinion to have been formed against them. We desire, therefore, that you may know that we look upon the Order of Friars Minor as one

(163) Wading says, that these two Briefs, addressed to the Archbishop of Sens, and to the Bishop of Paris, are in the original in the archives of the great Convent of the Observance at Paris. Ad. ann. 1220, n. 56.

of those which are approved of, and we acknowledge them to be Catholic and pious men. For which reason we have thought proper to warn and exhort you by the present letters, to receive the aforesaid brethren in your diocesses, as being truly faithful and religious persons, and to show them particular attention, out of the respect you have for God and for us, who recommend them to you. Given at Viterbo, the 4th of the Calends of June, in the fourth year of our Pontificate." This was the 29th of May 1220.

Francis left the convent of Saint Mary of the Angels, in the beginning of the year 1221, in order to visit some of his other convents. Peter of Catania, the vicar-general, found some opposition to his government. Although he was naturally of a mild disposition, he had, nevertheless, sufficient firmness to chide those who were not regular in their conduct, and this was not agreeable to all; those who were in fault declared their opposition to him, and there were even some who resisted his orders, and others who censured him. This is what superiors of all kinds have to expect who do not resemble the high priest Heli, (164) whom the spirit of indifference, the blameable love of ease, and the human wish for popularity, do not render so weak as to suffer those evils which it is their duty to check and put a stop to, and to neglect the good which it behoves them to support.

The vicar-general, grieved and vexed by the ob-

(164) 1 Reg. cap. ii. 24 and 29, cap. iii. 13.

stacles thrown in his way, wrote to Francis on the subject, and received the following reply :—

"To my reverend father in Jesus Christ, brother Peter, minister-general, brother Francis sends greeting :—

"May the Lord be your defence, and may He preserve you in His holy charity. My dear brother, I recommend you to have great patience in all your conduct, so that if any one of your brethren, or any one else, whoever he may be, should happen to thwart you, or should even venture to strike you, you should take all this as so much grace bestowed upon you ; be always sincerely in this disposition, and never swerve from it. Love those who behave in this manner to you, and do not expect any change on their parts, unless in so far as it shall please God to do you the favour to cause them to mend ; this is what you should propose to yourself in loving them. The mark by which I shall know that you love God, and that you have an affection for me, who am His servant and yours, is, that no one of our brethren, whatever faults he may have committed, shall leave you without having felt the effects of your mercy ; should he not ask it of you, be beforehand with him, and ask him if he wishes for it ; and if, after having refused it, he comes constantly before you, show him, in order to bring him back to a proper way of thinking, more affection than you would even show to me. Have always compassion for such as are in this state; and let the guar-

dians (165) know, when you have an opportunity, that it is your decided intention to act up to this. Let all the brethren, who may be cognizant of the fault of one of them, abstain from reproaching him with it, and let them forbear from making it known ; but on the contrary, let them entertain feelings of compassion for him, and keep the thing secret. It is not such as are in health who need a physician, but they who are ill. (166) If one of the brethren, by the temptation of the evil one, should unhappily fall into a mortal sin, let him be obliged by virtue of obedience to address himself to the guardian, who will also be obliged by obedience to send him to the custos, (167) and let

(165) The Superiors of the houses of the Order of S. Francis, are called Guardians, because the humility of the holy Patriarch did not choose that they should be called Priors. Regul. S. Francis, cap. 6. Gardian means, as does custos, a man employed to take care, to preserve, to watch, to look after. It is derived from Guardianus, or Gardianus, Guardium, Guardin, Garda, terms of low Latin, taken from the German, warden, which has the same signification. Dict. Etymologique de Ménage.

(166) Math. ix. 12.

(167) The Custos signifies the Provincial. S. Bonaventure remarks that the name of Custos was given by S. Francis to the General, the Provincials, and even to the Guardian, to mark the duty of the office, and not the title of the grades; and when he says in the 6th chapter of the rule, and elsewhere, Ministri et Custodes, it is as if he said the ministers who are to watch and be careful. Ministerium dicit humilitatem, Custodia vigilantiam insinuat pastoralem. Now, as the holy Doctor was well versed in the form of the Government of the Order, we must acknowledge that, in the beginning, there were none of these Custodes, who have since been established in the provinces which are extensive, to have charge of a certain number of convents, under the direction of the Provincial. There was also a Custos of the Custodes, who was elected by the Chapter of the province, to go in the capacity of a Discreet to the General Chapter, with the Provincial; and this election is still observed even in those provinces where there are no Custodes any longer. S. Bonav. Expos. in Reg. cap. 4 and 8.

the custos take care to provide for the conscience of the guilty, as he could wish his own to be taken care of. And let it not be permitted to any of the custodes to enjoin him any other penance than this:—'Go and henceforth sin no more.' (168) Do as I direct you."

When St. Francis does not permit the superiors to enjoin any other penance for a mortal sin than this:—"Go, and henceforth sin no more;" we see clearly that he only speaks of regular and public penances, (169) such as would be given for a secret fault, and in no way of those which are enjoined *in foro conscientiæ*, for the expiation of the sin, or for the prevention of relapse. For just before, he obliges the custos, by obedience, to whom one of the brethren guilty of mortal sin shall have been sent, to provide for the conscience of that religious as he would his own to be provided for. Now, the custos in such a case could not think it reasonable if a penance at once satisfactory and preservative were not imposed on him. For public faults the holy founder no doubt intended that they should be publicly punished, since he gave the example on several occasions, as we shall see. If in this letter he recommends mildness and clemency rather than justice and severity, it is because he adopted the sentiments of our blessed Saviour, whose mildness to sinners who were not proud nor obstinate, as the Pharisees, was so great; it was because he knew what St.

(168) 1 John, viii. 11.

(169) Wading did not think of that when he put in his 15th note upon this letter: Cum grano salis est intelligendum.

Paul says, "that advice must be given to our brethren in the spirit of meekness; reprove, entreat, rebuke, with all patience and doctrine;"(170) finally, because writing to the vicar-general, who was grieved by the frowardness of some of the brethren, and fearing lest some human considerations might be mixed up with his zeal, he had the intention and wish merely to mollify and soften him; and, indeed, every one who is in place is naturally inclined to be harsh to those who counteract his authority, and therefore on this head required rather to be curbed than urged on.

Peter of Catania acted entirely upon the terms of the letter of his patriarch; but he did not long continue in the post of vicar-general. (171) Wading believes that he died in this year, 1221, on the 10th of March, and he is followed in this opinion by Father Artus du Moutier, a Franciscan, by Bollandus, and by Fleury, who thought the date certain because it was grounded on the epitaph on the tomb of Peter of Catania, in the church of St. Mary of the Angels, but what we have brought forward in the note (172) which is below, clearly

(170) 1 Galat. vi. 1, 2 Timothy, iv, 2.

(171) Artus a Monast. Mart. Fr. 10 Martii, Act, SS. Bolland. Tom. 2, Mart. die 10 inter Prætermiss. Hist. Eccl. tom. 16, lib. 78 n. 43.

(172) Octavius, Bishop of Assisi, relates and notices the figures on the epitaph, which mark the year and the day of the death of Peter of Catania, and show that Wading has been mistaken in them. It is in his book entitled, Lumi Serafici di Portiuncula, from which we have already taken quotations. These are his own words: Non posso di meno di notare un grave fallo de Cronologia nell' annalista Francescano Luca Vadingo, per altro accuratissimo et eruditissimo, Egli pone la morte di Fra Pietro Catani nel

shows that Peter died on the 2nd of March, 1224. Now, as in the general chapter held in this year,

1221; alli 10, di Marzo, e poi nel 1223, pone che ando a Roma con S. Francesco. La cagion dello sbaglio si è perché in fatti gl' antichi monumenti lo dicono compagno di questa andata; per l'altra parte poi la pietra del monumento suo in Portiuncula dove anch, oggi si vede ha l' inscrizionne equivoca. In quella sta cosi MCCXX. IVII, d. Martii L'ha cosi intesa Vadingo MCCXXI. e poi VI. id. come à dire millesimo ducentesimo vigesimo primo, sexto idus Martii. ma in realta deve leggersi cosi, MCCXXIV, poi ii, d. cioe a dire millesimo ducentesimo vigesimo quarto, secunda die Martii.

Father Megrigny a Capuchin, and afterwards Bishop of Grasse, whose memory is revered in the Church for his zeal against the reformers, and for his eminent virtues, bears witness to the correctness of the figures taken by Octavius; according to what Father Assermet, of the great convent of the Observatines, Dr. of the Sorbonne relates, in his critical and anti-critical History of the Indulgence of the Portiuncula, printed a Lyons, in 1719. The Bishop of Grasse, passing by there (the Convent of St. Mary of the Angels near Assisi) on his return from the General Chapter, told me that the epitaph was written, as the Bishop of Assisi points out in his Lumi Seraphici. Moreover, no one will be rash enough to call in question the truth of a fact publicly attested by a bishop, who saw it with his own eyes in his diocese, where every one may see it as he did.

It is clear that the numbers on the epitaph have been ill-placed by the carver, MCCXX. IVII d. Martii. Wading has placed them thus: MCCXXI. VI. Id. Martii, and finds them to stand for, millesimo ducentesimo vigesimo primo sexto idus Martii. The bishop of Assisi arranges them thus: millesimo ducentesimo vigesimo quarto secunda die Martii. We believe that no one will hesitate in agreeing with the bishop. His opinion has been followed by Father Mathias Grouwels, a Franciscan professor of Theology at Louvain in his Critical History of the Indulgence of Portiuncula, written in Latin, and printed at Antwerp, in 1726, by Verdussen, of which work we shall speak in our remarks on this indulgence. But what must fix the death of Peter of Catania, in the year 1224, and not in 1221, is that there exist authentic records which prove that he was alive in 1223. Wading saw these and quotes them in the year 1223, with the name of Peter of Catania, so that by an extraordinary anachronism, he represents him represented as alive in 1223, him whom he had reported as dead in 1221, and whose death he told us was attended with peculiar circumstances, This is one of those faults which are fallen into by those who are neither deficient in extent nor in exactness generally, and which do not show any intention to mislead the reader,

1221, at Whitsuntide, on the 30th of May, another vicar-general was appointed, who certainly held that office in the year 1223, as we shall see; and, moreover, it does not seem likely that so holy a man as Peter of Catania should have been deposed by St. Francis, besides which no author has spoken of it. We cannot therefore avoid concluding that he resigned his place out of humility, and to be freed from a burthen that saintly persons often find too much for them.

Francis having received the resignation of his vicar-general, on his return from his visitations, deferred the choice of his successor till the assembly of the chapter which was held on Whitsunday. He consulted God on the election, who made known to him by revelation, that brother Elias should be restored; he communicated this to his companions, and when the chapter met he named Elias vicar-general.

We may feel assured that after having deposed him for laxness, he would not again have placed him at the head of his order, had he not been certain that God Himself had ordered it. As soon as the saints are made aware of the will of God, they have no thought but of obeying; whether it be that they know His reasons, or that they be hidden from them. Thus, three hundred years before St. Francis, St. Stephen, the third abbot of Citeaux (173) did not fail sending Arnaud to Morimond to be its first abbot,

(173) Manriq. Ann. Cisterc. ad ann. 1215, Cap. 3, n. 3. Essai de l'Histoire de l'Order de Citeaux, tom. 1, p. 306. 3 Reg. 19, 15 and 16, 4 Reg. 8. 11. and 22.

although he knew by divine inspiration, that this post would be prejudicial to him, and that it would not turn out well: it was enough for him that it was God's will that he should be so sent. Thus we find in holy writ, that Eliseus, by God's order to Elias, consecrated Hazael king of Syria, who he foresaw would bring such great evils on the people of God, that the foresight moved him to tears. Human prudence must not censure in the saints what they have only done from supernatural views, against their own impressions, and their own inclinations. In these extraordinary cases we must only adore the counsels of divine wisdom, without endeavouring to penetrate them: acknowledge, as Tobias did, (174) that all His ways are ways of mercy, truth and justice; and say with one of the prophets: "Thy loss comes from thyself." (175)

At the chapter Francis sat at the feet of Elias and his infirmities prevented him from making himself heard; it was through Elias that he proposed all that he wished to communicate to the assembly. Towards the close he pulled him by the tunic and told him in a low tone of voice his intention of sending some of the brethren into parts of Upper Germany, into which they had not yet penetrated. Elias laid the affair before the brethren in the following terms: "My brethren, this is what the Brother says (for thus they designated Francis, as a mark of great respect). There is a part of Germany, the inhabi-

(174) Fab, 3 2, (175) Osée 13 9.

tants of which are Christians and devout; they go, as you know, through our country during the heats with long staves and great jack-boots, singing the praises of God and His saints, and thus visit the places of devotion. I sent some of our brethren into their land who returned often having been sorely ill treated. For this reason I compel no one to go thither, but if there are any sufficiently zealous for the glory of God, and, the salvation of souls, to undertake this journey I promise him the same merit as is attached to obedience, and even more than if he made a voyage over the sea."

About ninety offered themselves for the mission which they considered as an opportunity for suffering martyrdom. The chief was named with the title of provincial minister of Germany, and Brother Cesar a German, was selected for that office; he was an ecclesiastic of Spire, who had been drawn into the Order by the preaching of Brother Elias, (176) some time before, he himself having the character of a good preacher. He had permission to select those whom he desired to take with him from among those who had volunteered; however, he only chose twenty-seven, twelve of whom were priests, and fifteen lay-brethren, among whom there were some Germans, and some Hungarians, excellent preachers.

(176) Although he was relaxed and had some vanity, God nevertheless made use of him for the salvation of souls, which proves that His word operates independent of the disposition of those who announce it, in the hearts of such auditors as are prepared to attend to it.

He remained nearly three months in the valley of Spoletto, with leave from Francis, and sent his companions into Lombardy to prepare themselves for the great work they were about to undertake; then they set forth dividing themselves into small groups of three and four. We shall further on give the details of their journey, and of their labours and success.

In the choice which Cesar made of those whom he thought adapted to the German mission something occurred which at first was amusing, but which turned out very serious and very useful. Some one having suggested to him to take one of the brethren named Jourdain, he went to him and said:—"And you brother Jourdain, you will come with us." "Me," replied he, "I am not one of yours; if I rose up it was not with any intention of going with you, it was to embrace those who were about to go into Germany, and who, I am certain, will all be martyred." He was so apprehensive that the Germans by their cruelty, and the heretics of Lombardy by their artifices, would be the causes of his losing his faith, that he daily prayed to God for the favour of being kept away from the one and from the other.

Cesar, continuing to urge him to go with him, and Jourdain continuing to refuse, they went to the vicar-general, who, after having been informed how the matter stood, said to Jourdain:—"My brother, I command you on your holy obedience, to decide absolutely upon going into Germany or not to go." This order put his conscience in a dilemma; if he should not go, he feared its re-

proach for having followed his own will, and did not like to lose a glorious crown ; and, on the other hand, he could not determine on going, thinking the Germans so cruel as he had been led to believe. In order to come to a conclusion, he consulted one of the religious who had greatly suffered in the first mission, and had been stripped in Hungary no less than fifteen times, who said to him :—"Go to brother Elias, and tell him that you are neither willing to go into Germany nor to stay here, but that you will do whatsoever he shall desire you. You will hardly have addressed him, but your difficulties will be done away." He followed this advice, and Elias ordered him by the obligation of obedience to accompany brother Cesar into Germany. He went and laboured assiduously, and more than any of the others, to extend the order throughout the country. His obedience quieted his mind, which his own choice would have failed to procure him, for a man is never more satisfied with himself than when he obeys. "Experience shows," says St. Bernard, "that the yoke of obedience is light, and that self-will is oppressive. (177)

Anthony had heard in Sicily that the chapter was to assemble at St. Mary of the Angels, and although he was still in a state of weakness, he had come to it with Philippinus, a young lay brother of Castille. When the chapter was over, the brethren were sent back to their convents by the vicar-general, but no one asked to have

(177) De Precept. et Disp., cap. 10. De dilig. Deo cap. 13.

Anthony, because no one knew him, and he appeared so feeble that he did not seem fit for work. He offered himself therefore to brother Gratian, who was provincial of Bologna, or of Romagna, whom he begged to take him, to instruct him in the rules of regular discipline, making no mention of his studies, or of any talent he had, and showing no other desire than to know and love the crucified Jesus. Gratian delighted with these his sentiments, asked to have him, and took him with him into his province, with Philippinus, who was sent to Città di Castello, and from thence to Columbario, in Tuscany, where he died a holy death. Anthony, who only wished for solitude, had leave from the provincial to live at the hermitage of Mount St. Paul, near Bologna, where he wished to have a cell cut in the rock, which was separated from all the others, which the brother who had cut it out for himself ceded to him. There he lived in as much solitude as obedience allowed him, devoting himself to contemplation, fasting on bread and water, and practising such other austerities, as to be thereby so weakened, that according to the relation of his brethren, he could hardly stand when he came to them. Although he was full of zeal, he did not dare attempt to preach; the martyrdom which he had escaped in Africa had rendered him timid; he abandoned himself to Divine Providence, without any other anxiety than that of exciting himself to the more perfect love of God, and strengthening himself in the hope of enjoying the good things of Heaven, and resisting the attacks of the

tempter, who strove to dissuade him from the holy exercise of prayer. Living thus in great simplicity among his unpretending brethren, he disguised under a plain exterior the vast lights he received from Heaven, but by that humility he deserved to be brought forward for the accomplishment of the designs of Providence, who generally prepares those in secret whom he destines to splendid ministrations, and who brought forward this His servant, as will be hereafter shown.

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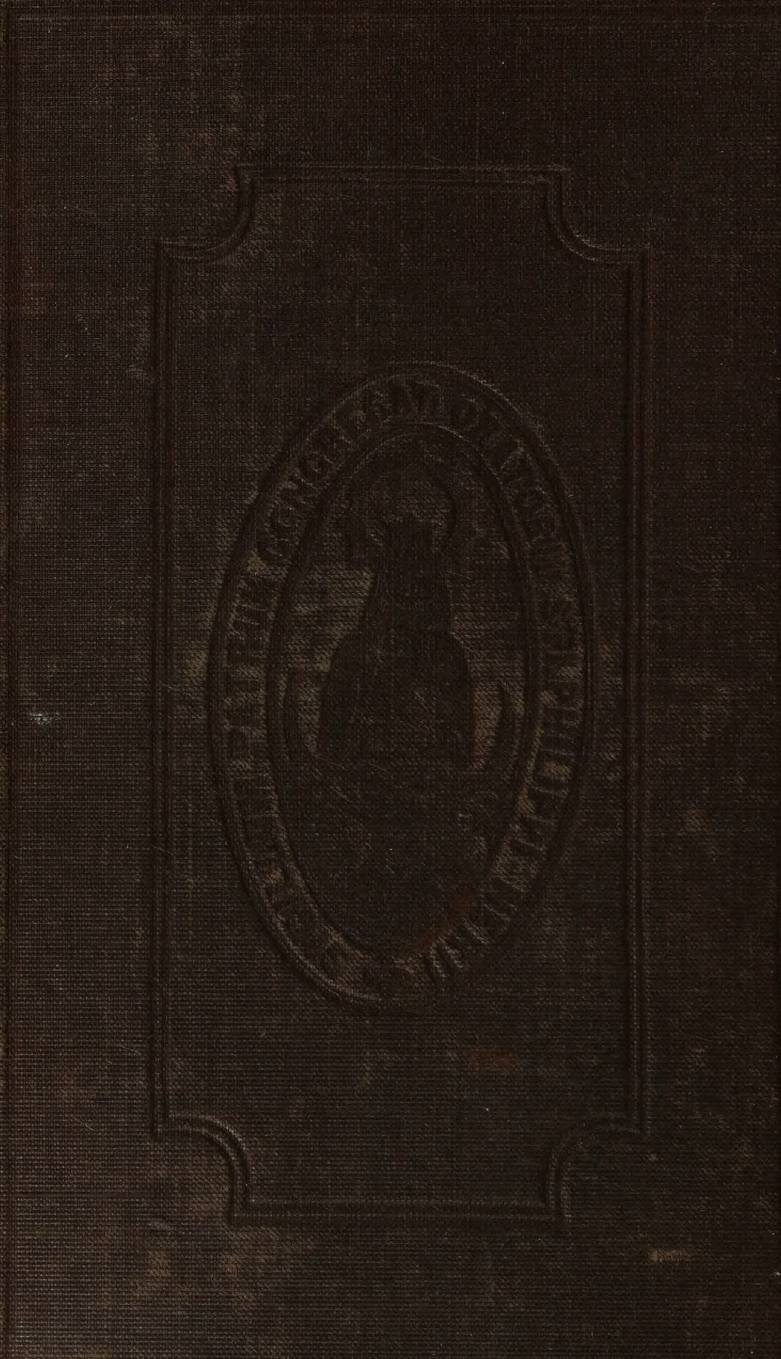
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